

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INDIANA

1789 - 1834

BY

THOMAS TIMOTHY McAVOY, A.M.

ARCHIVIST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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THOMAS FRANCIS BUTLER, C.S.C.
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PREFACE

To examine the religious contribution of the French in the whole of the Northwest is a task too great for a single study. The present writer has chosen, consequently, the locality in which his previous experience has given him greater knowledge; and has concentrated on the period when the transition from the French foundations to the later church is most clearly seen. The locality will be the State of Indiana, the territory of the present dioceses of Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, and the time from 1789 to 1834. Both chronological and geographic limits will be exceeded occasionally. Especially will this be true of the geographical limits, because, while both sides of the Wabash were under the care of Vincennes in this early period, the limitation to the eastern bank makes little difference; on the other hand, while the St. Joseph Mission was in the present State of Michigan, it ministered to most of the northern part of Indiana as well.

Within this narrower scope there are portions of the history that have never been told. The writer has had access to newly discovered material in the form of letters and a journal of Father Rivet, and unpublished letters of Fathers, later Bishops, Flaget, Chabrat and Blanc and Fathers Jeanjean, Acquaroni, Picot, Champomier and Badin. In addition printed letters that have escaped other writers on Vincennes have yielded their bits of new information. These, with other published and unpublished documents, will enable us to relate more completely the history of this neglected portion of Indiana Catholic history and, at the same time, to give the various elements of the story their proper significance.

Seeking sources for this study, one becomes aware that the general histories contain little detailed information about early Indiana outside of the campaigns of George Rogers Clark and the cooperation of Father Pierre Gibault. John Gilmary Shea,¹

¹ John Gilmary Shea, *The Catholic Church in Colonial Days*, New York, 1886; *Life and Times of Archbishop Carroll*, New York, 1888; *Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States*, New York, 1854.

while very reliable in his statements, could devote but a small portion of his four volumes to this one corner of the country. Likewise, Monsignor Peter Guilday,² in his life of Archbishop Carroll necessarily gave but cursory glances to the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains. Bishop Martin John Spalding's³ studies of Catholicism in Kentucky and his biography of Bishop Flaget are indispensable sources for Flaget's life at Vincennes and his relations with Vincennes as Bishop of Bardstown. The official historian of the Church in Indiana, Bishop Herman Joseph Alerding,⁴ was dependent upon the scanty records that remained at the old cathedral at the time of his writing. The history of the Vincennes cathedral by Henry S. Cauthorne⁵ contains much information drawn from extant cathedral records and traditions of his own family, but lacks organization and has many inaccuracies traceable to the limitation in his sources. Blanchard's⁶ history of the Church in Indiana gives little evidence of research in the early period, although the biographical sketches of contemporary families are useful. The numerous parish histories are generally unsystematic in form and confined to later history. For the general history of Vincennes the most useful are Esarey's⁷ history of Indiana, the Goodspeed⁸ *History*

2 Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll*, 2 v., New York, 1922.

3 Martin John Spalding, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky*, compiled with the assistance of the Very Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin, Louisville, (1844); *Sketches of the Life, Time and Character of the Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, First Bishop of Louisville*, 1852.

4 Herman Joseph Alerding, *A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes*, Indianapolis, 1883; *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, Fort Wayne, 1907.

5 (Henry S. Cauthorne), *History of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral at Vincennes, Indiana*, Vincennes, 1892.

6 Charles Blanchard, ed. and comp., *History of the Catholic Church in Indiana*, 2 vols., Logansport, 1898.

7 Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana from its Earliest Exploration to 1850*, Indianapolis, 1915.

8 *History of Knox and Daviess Counties, Indiana*, Chicago, Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1886.

of *Knox and Daviess Counties*, and Moses Dawson's⁹ life of William Henry Harrison.

There are many collections of printed documentary material, the chief of which are the *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society*,¹⁰ the *American Catholic Historical Researches*,¹¹ and the *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*.¹² Other printed sources from which information has been drawn will be noted in the course of the study.

The unprinted materials available for the first time to the writer of this study not only fill out lacunae in previous knowledge but supply the more detailed information necessary to support the thesis of the fidelity of the French throughout the period. Vincennes itself yielded little that was not available to other writers. There are still preserved the parish registers from 1749, a few account books, some minutes of trustee meetings and a few stray letters. Both Bishop Bruté and Bishop Hailandiere were anxious to write a history of the church at Vincennes and had saved and organized all the letters and reports of the early missionaries; but these, with the exception of a few letters from Rome and a group of documents concerning Father Benjamin Petit, were destroyed a few years later.¹³ The Bardstown Archives, since Bardstown was the parent see of the West, should be the richest source for Vincennes history from 1810 to 1834; but the letters received by the early bishops as well as the personal journals¹⁴ of Bishop Flaget were destroyed by one of his successors, leaving a void that can never be filled. Only those portions which Bishop Spalding incorporated in his books remain; and, because of this, Spalding's historical writings on

9 Moses Dawson, *A Historical Narrative of the Civil and Military Services of Major-General William H. Harrison*, Cincinnati, 1824.

10 *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Springfield, 1901-.

11 *American Catholic Historical Researches*, Philadelphia, 1884-1912.

12 *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, Lyons, France, 1822-.

13 Alerding, *Diocese of Vincennes*, p. 174.

14 The one extant volume of the journals in the Archives of the University of Notre Dame has no information on Vincennes during the years covered.

Kentucky have become a primary source for the history of Catholicism in that state and for the life of Bishop Flaget.

The Archdiocesan Archives of Baltimore contain a rich collection of letters of Father Jean Francois Rivet and some valuable letters of the other missionaries at Vincennes, especially of Fathers Donatien Olivier, Stephen Theodore Badin, Charles Nerinckx, and Gabriel Richard. These are more important because of the loss of the Bardstown papers. The letters of Father Pierre Gibault to Bishop Carroll are missing. At St. Louis, in the Archdiocesan Archives, are letters to Bishops William DuBourg and Joseph Rosati from Fathers Blanc, Jeanjean, Champomier, St. Cyr, Picot and Bishop Bruté. In the Archdiocesan Archives of Quebec are many letters of missionaries to the Illinois country under the regime of the bishops of Quebec, and occasional letters of Bishops Flaget, Edward Fenwick, and Bruté. Letters of Fathers Donatien Olivier, Guillet, and Edmund Burke, heretofore unpublished, add new information. Twelve letters of Father Rivet to Bishop John Carroll, containing useful accounts of his missionary adventures were found in the papers of the late Bishop Camillus Maes of Covington. The Archives of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore have letters of Bishop Flaget to his Sulpician superiors and transcripts of some written to St. Sulpice in Paris and to his brothers. These, in addition to some letters of his confrere, Bishop John David, contain invaluable material on Flagets' work in Kentucky and on some of his journeys into Indiana and Illinois. Mt. St. Joseph's and Mt. St. Mary's colleges at Emmitsburgh have rich collections dealing with Bishop Bruté, most of which have not been used before.

The Archives of the University of Notre Dame possess Bishop Briand's letter appointing Father Gibault to the missions, Father Rivet's journal, letters of Flaget, Rosati, Bruté, Boheme, Badin and Richard, the baptismal register of the newer St. Joseph Mission, what remains of the historical notes of Bishops Bruté and Hailandiere, a few letters from Rome to the first bishops of Vincennes, the notes and collections of

Father J. P. Schmitt, a collection of transcripts from the Propaganda Archives dealing with the Middle West, and the notes of Father Ernest Audran, nephew of Bishop Hailandiere and one-time rector of the Vincennes cathedral. Very little of this material dealing with the early church in Indiana has been used before. The most valuable were the journal of Rivet and the notes of Bishops Brute and Hailandiere. The Indiana State Historical Library has the papers of Hyacinthe Lasselle, trader at Vincennes and Logansport, the account books of fur trader Joseph Bailey, the papers of General John Tipton, and a collection of early Indiana newspapers the most important of which is the *Vincennes Sun*. The Lasselle papers include invaluable miscellaneous items from Vincennes, such as fur trade invoices, church accounts when he was a trustee, and letters of Fathers Flaget, Acquaroni, Champomier, and Blanc. In the Missouri Historical Society collections in St. Louis valuable information was obtained from the George Rogers Clark papers, and the New Madrid Archives. The New Madrid Archives contain, in the papers of Father Gibault, letters from Bishop Carroll and Father Rivet and various items about Vincennes and Ouiatenon.

For the background of the period the St. Clair papers in the Ohio State Library, the Winthrop Sargent papers in the Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society archives in Columbus, the Draper Collections in the Wisconsin Historical Society Collections at Madison, the Taylor and Burnet Accounts in the Northern Indiana Historical Society at South Bend, the Har-mar and Gage papers in the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, the Northwest Territory Collection in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the files of the Indian Bureau and the Adjutant General's Office, and many other smaller collections have been useful.

The writer is deeply grateful to the custodians of these collections for their great kindness to him during his researches. He is, likewise, especially indebted to His Excellency Bishop Francis W. Howard of Covington, for lending him twelve letters of Father Rivet from the papers of the late Bishop Camillus

Maes, and to their excellencies Archbishop Michael J. Curley of Baltimore, Archbishop John J. Glennon of St. Louis, Bishop John Francis Noll of Fort Wayne, and Bishop Joseph E. Ritter of Indianapolis. He has had the advice of Professor John Allen Krout, under whose direction this study was made, and of Professor Herbert W. Schneider who read the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions. He wishes also to express his gratitude to his religious superiors, Rev. James A. Burns, C.S.C., and Most Rev. John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., D.D., without whose permission and assistance the study could not have been undertaken; likewise, to Mr. Paul R. Byrne, Librarian of the University of Notre Dame, who guided him in the collection of his materials, and Mr. Thomas Stritch, who made useful suggestions in the revision of the manuscript. Rev. John B. Tenny, S.S., of the Catholic Bureau of Indian Missions and Mr. Glenn Black of the Indian Historical Library have been especially helpful in the study of Indian conditions. For other assistance, he is indebted to Monsignor Peter K. Guilday, Ph.D., Rev. Edward J. Hickey, Ph.D., Monsignor Henry F. Dugan, Rev. Arsenius Boyer, S.S., Mr. Milo M. Quaife of the Burton Historical Library, Mrs. Leo Schultheis of Vincennes, and to the several priests of the Indianapolis and Fort Wayne dioceses who gave him lodging and assistance during his searches for material.

THOMAS T. McAVOY, C.S.C.

NOTRE DAME,
FEBRUARY 2, 1940.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

- AAB—Archdiocesan Archives of Baltimore.
AAQ—Archdiocesan Archives of Quebec.
AASL—Archdiocesan Archives of St. Louis.
ACHR—American Catholic Historical Researches.
ADC—Archives of the Diocese of Covington.
A.S.P.—American State Papers.
CHR—Catholic Historical Review.
DAB—Dictionary of American Biography.
IHSP—Indiana Historical Society Publications.
IILHC—Illinois State Historical Collections.
IMH—Indiana Magazine of History.
ISLC—Indiana State Library Collections.
MHSC—Missouri Historical Society Collections, St. Louis.
MPHC—Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections.
MVHR—Mississippi Valley Historical Review.
OSAHS—Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society.
OSLC—Ohio State Library Collections.
RACHS—Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia.
StMSA—St. Mary Seminary Archives, Baltimore.
TPUS—Territorial Papers of the United States.
UNDA—University of Notre Dame Archives.
WHSC—Wisconsin State Historical Society Collections.
WLCL—William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor.
WSHS—Wisconsin State Historical Society papers.
VPR—Vincennes Parish Records in the Old Cathedral Library.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN one discusses the history of the territory of the Old Northwest, the contribution of the French explorers who opened the waterways of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi Valley stands out in bold relief. Joliet, LaSalle, Tonti, and their followers were in the vanguard of occupation and business adventure. Although the French exploitation was never to compare with that of Anglo-Americans, present-day prosperity in this Middle West is based upon old foundations laid during the closing years of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century. While Chicago and Milwaukee are of American construction, one cannot overlook the French origins of Detroit, Green Bay and St. Louis. Nor can one forget the importance of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, the Chicago river, the Straits of Mackinac, and the St. Joseph-Kankakee and Maumee-Wabash portages, which with the Great Lakes were the chief highways of the French. The commerce that began with the fur trade in the early days of American history may have departed from some of these channels, but the Great Lakes still carry a tremendous business, and many of the railroads follow lines parallel to the old routes. There are few, however, who appreciate the French contribution to our present Middle West.

For the most part, the French of those old days seem to have passed away, leaving neither kindred nor heirs, permitting the children of other nations to enjoy the fruits of their labors. They were never very numerous. Exploration is always the work of a select few, never of the masses. Likewise, that outer rim of advancing civilization called the frontier is scarcely more populous; and with the exception of a few centers of trade the numerous migrations of French traders and farmers did not follow the French explorers into the Great Lakes regions. They settled a few villages, but even from these small groups many departed with the French flag, going to Canada, or to New Spain across the Mississippi.

Those who remained, chiefly engaged in the fur trade, had mingled with English and Scotch traders before the Americans advanced across the Ohio. Ultimately they were swamped by migrations from many nations. As late as the building of the Erie Canal, however, one could still find French settlements in the territory of the states of Wisconsin and Michigan. From Illinois and Indiana, the migration across the Mississippi was heavier, especially during the interlude between English and American rule. Today throughout the old Northwest there remain French names and some French families of the period before the English conquest. Other families, whose surnames have been anglicized, cherish some portion of the blood of those early Frenchmen.

We cannot appreciate the importance of the Great Lakes and the streams of the upper Mississippi Valley without remembering the men who first opened them to trade. These small bands of Frenchmen, who paddled or carried their canoes from Montreal to Lake Superior and Kaskaskia, have been honored for their courage, as well as for their contribution to geographical knowledge. It must not be forgotten, however, that they were frontiersmen. Whether the French explorer in his canoe, skirting the shores of Lake Michigan, fits into the generalities postulated of the American frontiersmen is not so clear, but in his daring, his resourcefulness and his independence he was not unlike the Anglo-American, and his service to humanity bore a similar stamp.

Of the institutions established by the French along the shores and banks of these western waters, few remain. The fur trade, though still existing in miniature, is nothing today for empires to fight over. The trade routes persist, though steam, electricity, and the gasoline engine have transformed them. Of the governmental structure, perhaps, least remains. No longer does a commandant take his orders from a distant monarch; democratic government and written law have effaced all trace of the old regulations of France. Of the language, the dress and the village customs, the few apparent remnants scattered throughout the

region are really later importations, for the old traditions have long since been swallowed up in American ways. After all, there is but one thing that remains: there is scarcely a place, in which once the Jesuit missionaries of Old France had a chapel, where today there does not stand at least one Catholic church. It is that persistence of Catholic faith throughout the history of the Middle West that interests the writer of this study. Leaving for others to examine the beginnings and later developments, he proposes to trace the fidelity of the French to their Catholic faith until joined by later Catholic immigrants.

In comparing these log chapels, or bough-covered altars, with the brick and stone structures which now lift Gothic spires above our cities, one is aware that there are differences. But one does not have to compare the primitive with the modern to understand these differences. In its external forms the Church always takes on the color of its environment. Even in the Christian Gothic there are French, Spanish, German and English variations. The richly decorated university chapel of today contains many more age-old symbols than the crude chapel in a frontier settlement. So, too, the religious thought of the frontiersman, who can neither read nor write, may be less precise than that of the sainted theologian whose name is pronounced in awe in religious schools. But in the Catholic Church there is no essential difference between the credo of the woodsman and the detailed credo of the cleric preparing for sacred orders. The sacraments administered in the forests of New France were the same as those of Rome itself. But, outside this essential unity, there is a divergence, as varied as the nations and classes that have accepted Christianity. In the progress of the Church in America the means of travel, the men who travelled, the means of livelihood, and the places where these means could be found have played a momentous part. In the Old Northwest, where there have been Catholics since the first French settlements, the Church has always borne some markings of the economic and social conflict through which her members have passed. To understand these distinctive marks, and the local expressions and

habits of the Church, the story of those conflicts must be studied carefully.

For the history of the early missions of the Jesuits among the Indians of the Great Lakes and the Upper Mississippi we have, as sources of information, chiefly the reports of the missionaries to their superiors, published for the edification of Catholic Europe and to interest the faithful in supporting these foreign enterprises. Successor to the early *Jesuit Relations*¹ are the *Lettres Édifiantes*. Parkman³ has written of these early missionaries; and subsequent historians have paid homage to their courage and zeal. Perhaps it is the concentration upon the efforts of the early missions to the Indians that has given us the notion, frequently expressed, that all the fruits of their labors have disappeared.

The disappearance of these early Jesuit missions is not hard to understand. In the first place, the missionaries were driven from the missions in the expulsion of the Jesuits themselves; and secondly, the handing over of the territory to a government little interested in Catholic missions was bound to have its effects. Sulpicians and secular clergy in smaller numbers, tried to keep up the work; but while the reverence for the "black robes" remained in several localities, the grand plans of the Jesuits never reached fruition. Then, too, with the exception of a few small reservations, the object of this magnificent endeavor was removed. The Indians became as Catholic as their limited knowledge and undeveloped intelligence permitted, but the foundation of the Church in the Middle West was not laid by them. No one of our social institutions of today is the product of our Indian inheritance. No matter how many primitive customs our white ancestors copied from the Indian, we have re-

1 *The Jesuit Relations and allied documents* ed. by R. G. Thwaites, 73 vols., Cleveland, 1896-1901.

2 *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses, écrites des Missions Étrangères*, Nouvelle édition, 14 vols., Lyon, 1819.

3 Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century*, Boston, 1867.

ceived them from the white man and not from the red man. This is true, also, of our religious institutions.

Throughout the Old Northwest, unnoted in the reports which the missionaries sent to the religious capitals of Europe, were settlements of Frenchmen engaged in trade and conquest. Some of these French married with the Indians; many more did not. These Frenchmen, too, were the objects of the solicitude of the passing missionary. Sometimes the priest did not live among his white brethern. The better to carry his message to the savage, he abandoned the meager comforts of the settlement to follow the Indian into the forests, although at regular intervals, as the old baptismal registers show, he came back to see that the French received the sacraments of baptism, matrimony and extreme unction. Some of the French were members of the small guard sent to protect the trade routes from enemy tribes or from approaching English traders. Others were in charge of trade centers. Where communication with the older communities of Canada or Louisiana was open, they brought their families with them and occasionally tilled the soil for their food and clothing. It is from these meager beginnings that we can trace the growth of the present Catholic Church of the Middle West, and certain characteristics that give the Church its local color in these regions.

For one who has lived in intimate association with the Catholic Church in more than one section of the country, there is no difficulty in perceiving its distinctive qualities in the Middle West. This indicates no essential divergence in faith or practice. It is a difference of local color. But it has great importance in the temporal history of the Church. Even within this region there are many variations, but there are certain qualities that the Middle Western Catholic has, partly from his history and partly from the traditions of the locality in which he lives. The Catholic from the Mid-West has been optimistic concerning the future of his church; he has manifested great poise and a sense of security in the face of a non-Catholic majority which in some localities has been quite antagonistic. These qualities have been

evident in his active part in social and public activities, in his insistence on Catholic schools and colleges, and particularly in his support of Catholic colleges for women.

To say that these qualities came largely from the priority of the French Catholics in these regions would be to assert an unprovable thesis. That priority is, however, one of the most important facts in the history of the Church in the Middle West, and it is on these old French foundations that the Church has built. It is a significant social fact that so long as white men have been in these regions there have always been Catholics. The French have become lost in the crowds of later migrations, but at the same time they have played their part in the development of certain other factors in Catholic life. The early immigrants found a common Catholicity in these men of other nationality, and so, in turn, later migrations from Ireland and Germany have tended to drop their national barriers in their common Catholic worship. Consequently, the Catholics of the Middle West are generally as much against foreign entanglements as their non-Catholic neighbors. Furthermore, the Catholic immigrant to the Middle West was usually better off financially than the immigrant who was forced to rush to the first job offered to him at the port of entry and lacked the means to seek the new land in the West. In the West he found his religion already known and respected, because of the French who had been there before him. These factors have deeply affected Catholic life in the Middle West.

While the numbers of French families that can be traced from the present day back to the days of the old regime along the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi are few, there was a time when these small numbers were sufficient to make a majority. There are not many sections of the Middle West where the same families have remained for over a hundred years, yet we do not for that reason cease to honor the pioneers whose children have sought other fields. In considering the French of the Middle West, or the Spanish of the Southwest, as pioneers, we are sometimes restrained by national and cultural prejudices

from according to them the credit which their energy deserves. The passage of time gives us new perspectives, minimizing the importance of the accidents of birth, language, dress and color.

The low opinion of the French of Vincennes is based for the most part on the criticisms expressed by the first Englishmen to enter the country after 1763. George Croghan,⁴ taken to Vincennes as an Indian captive on June 15, 1765, called the French "a parcel of renegadoes". Captain Alexander Fraser,⁵ in his reports to General Haldimand, May 4, 1766, described the French of Illinois as "transported convicts or people who have fled for some crime". Likewise, General Thomas Gage⁶ in his reports to Lord Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1769, said of Vincennes: "I find that Strollers and Vagabonds from Canada, Detroit, Illinois, and other places have assembled there, to live a lazy kind of Indian life, or taken shelter from justice." Gage urged the British government to send a detachment of troops to govern them and, with the approval of Lord Hillsborough, ordered the people of "Post St. Vincent", as vagabonds, to retire from the country.

All these criticisms had as their foundation the presumption that the inhabitants of the village were mere *coureurs de bois* and had no valid claim to their lands. Gage added in his letter of March 4, 1772:⁷ "It is remarkable that the Indians of that and other parts of the Country, have suffered a parcel of French Vagabonds amongst them, when we constantly receive complaints if a few traders or others of our People attempt the smallest Settlement in any part of the Indian country." Gage could not understand how these "vagabonds" could have legitimate titles to these lands. The French of Vincennes answered⁸

4 Croghan's Journal, June 15, 1765, IIIHC, XI, pp. 31-32.

5 Fraser to (Haldimand) May 4, 1766, IIIHC, XI, pp. 237-8.

6 *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775*, comp. and ed. by Clarence E. Carter, 2 v., New Haven, 1931-3. Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1769, I, p. 212.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 318-9.

8 Florence Gould Watts, "Some Vincennes Documents of 1772," IMH, XXXIV, pp. 199-212, especially the letter of the Settlers of Post Vincennes to Gage, pp. 208-12.

his order to remove by asserting that they were not vagabonds but "peaceful settlers," and by claiming titles to their lands by reason of grants of the commandants. Recognizing the right of commandants under the French law to make such grants, Gage⁹ demanded proof of their claims. To his surprise, the inhabitants of Vincennes were able to show that they had titles¹⁰ to their lands. Contrary to the opinions of Croghan, Fraser, and Gates, they were not renegades or vagabonds. Subsequently, Lord Dartmouth¹¹ wrote to Gage ordering him to protect them in their rights as guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris. "... Seeing that the inhabitants there no longer appear a lawless vagabond Banditti, as they have been represented to be, but in the light of Subjects claiming the King's protection and countenance in Right of Possessions held under regular Titles." The criticisms of the early French have been widely circulated, but the answering declaration of Lord Dartmouth has received little notice, possibly because the American Revolution prevented the application of the Quebec Act and other British plans for governing the Illinois Country.

Other opinions have arisen out of partisan comparisons of the French and the English. The relative values of these French and English cultures are a matter of debate, but our prejudices should not blind us to the fact that each national group has a complete, even though a different, set of values. Parkman, the chief historian of the French regime in Canada and the West, felt it necessary to show the supremacy of English Protestant culture.¹² With that theme the justification of an alien national culture became difficult. He made much of the dependence of the French on governmental aid and direction. He called this

9 Gage to Lord Dartmouth, April 7, 1773, *Correspondence of General Gage*, I, p. 348.

10 IHSP, II, pp. 425-7.

11 Lord Dartmouth to Gage, Mar. 3, 1773, *Correspondence of General Gage*, II, pp. 156-7.

12 Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada* (Library Edition), 1899, 2 vols., I, pp. 50-68.

practice "the besetting evil of trade and industry"¹³ and showed how it did not work out in the fur trade monopolies. Free enterprise, on the other hand, was the life-blood of the Anglo-American frontier movements. The Americans, who succeeded the French in the West, were not much interested in fur trade or in business monopolies, but chiefly in land.¹⁴ Even though the word monopoly was not applied to the method of distribution, it would be useless to deny that the government of the United States played a most important role in the supply, the sale and the control of this land. One of the first petitions of the Vincennes inhabitants to Congress for lands, confesses their failure to understand the importance of land, while they were engaged in the fur-trade. Suddenly with the loss of the fur-trade and the advent of American land speculators, they realized that the future lay in the possession of the soil and sought to regain the opportunities which they had wasted. They had to direct their petition, not to their neighbors—for the Americans of those earlier days had made the same mistake—but to the government which was reaching out for these Indian lands, destroying all previous titles and making grants to those who had the money to buy, and frequently to those who had the money to buy great quantities.

Speaking of their tradition of government, John Cleves Symmes could say that these French were not prepared for democratic government; but had the French known how to use democratic government as well as did Symmes, perhaps he would not have found it so profitable to live in the West. Although the French were not numerous enough at the close of the eighteenth century to settle and farm the whole Mississippi Valley, the form of government had little to do with the fact that they traded in furs while

¹³ Francis Parkman, *The Old Régime in Canada*, Boston, 1875, p. 292.

¹⁴ Frederick J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York, 1920; Peter G. Mode, *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, New York, 1923, p. 11; Frederick L. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, Boston (1924), pp. 43-5, 95.

the incoming Americans traded in land, and that the fur business collapsed while the land business boomed. Furthermore, the relative efficiency of the two forms of government on the frontier is not entirely clear. Americans, who have experienced the protection guaranteed by our systems of written laws, are loath to see anything good in government by the arbitrary decision of a commandant or a royal governor. But it is a fact that those who lived under the old French rule were not the ones who complained.¹⁵ There were unwritten guarantees which made these people follow the decisions of the commandant, and appeal¹⁶ to a higher officer when they felt they were unjustly treated. The United States, on the other hand, did not grant self-government immediately, but provided a territorial arrangement until such time as guarantees could be given that democratic forms would be assured in the new state. Harrison, as representative of national authority, did bring order out of chaos, but that chaos was the result not of French government but rather the lack of government from which the territory had suffered from the end of the French regime in 1763 to the arrival of American armed forces under Harmar and Hamtramck in 1787.

Writing with a thesis similar to that of Parkman, Beverley W. Bond, Jr., in his *The Civilization of the Old Northwest* says that the French presented a difficult problem of government. "Illiterate, usually not understanding English at all, they were a shiftless lot, unaccustomed to self-government, and chiefly concerned with the problem of securing a living."¹⁷ Illiterate they were at the time of the American occupation and as innocent of English as the English frontiersman was of French.

15 For Symmes see John Cleves Symmes to Robert Morris, June 22, 1790, *Correspondence*, ed. by Bond, p. 288; cf. Francis S. Philbrick, ed., *The Laws of Indiana Territory 1801-1809*, Ind. Historical Bureau Reprint, 1931, ccxii to ccxxv.

16 *History of Knox and Daviess Counties*, Goodspeed Publishing Co., Chicago, 1886, p. 19 and note.

17 Beverley W. Bond, Jr., *The Civilization of the Old Northwest 1788-1812*, New York, 1934, p. 150.

"Shiftless lot" is a phrase unsympathetic with the sufferings which these people had endured. That they were "chiefly concerned with the problem of securing a living" is hardly a distinguishing mark of the French. All frontiersmen were deeply, if not wholly, concerned with the problem, and it was usually a problem not so hard to solve as it was for the conquered and despoiled people of Vincennes. But before they lost their businesses and their lands it is doubtful if making a living was their chief concern. The "shiftlessness" of these French is merely the business-like Yankee's perception of that fact that the Frenchman in these frontier settlements seemed intent upon enjoying what he had, instead of being industriously concerned with the acquisition of greater wealth. Reynolds found this quality admirable:

In a century before 1800, they were enabled to solve the problem: that neither wealth, nor splendid possessions, nor an extraordinary degree of ambition, nor energy, ever made a people happy. These people resided more than a thousand miles from any other colony, and were strangers to wealth or poverty; but the Christian virtues governed their hearts, and they were happy.¹⁸

There is a difference of culture here that is hard to define, yet easily perceptible. The virtue of thrift, which was stressed so much by the Protestant ethic that was to become dominant in American life, was not nearly so important to these French whose Catholicity was that of the France of Louis XIV. The love of the dance and of games, which is found in all the French settlements of those early days, meant only indolence and vice to the American observer. Charlevoix at Quebec in 1720, while admiring the social joys of the French Colonists, sets down rather succinctly the differences in these two cultures:

The case is very different as I am informed with respect to our English neighbors, and to judge of the two colonies by the way of life, behaviour, and speech of the inhabitants, nobody would hesitate to say that ours were the most flourishing. In New England

¹⁸ John Reynolds, *My Own Times, Embracing also the History of my Life*, Belleville, Ill., 1885, p. 60.

and the other provinces of the continent of America, subjects to the British empire, there prevails an opulence which they are utterly at a loss how to use; and in New France, a poverty hid by an air of being in easy circumstances, which seems not at all studied. Trade, and the cultivation of their plantations strengthens the first, whereas the second is supported by the industry of the inhabitants, and the taste of the nation diffuses over it something infinitely pleasing. The English planter amasses wealth, and never makes any superfluous expense: the French inhabitant again enjoys what he has acquired, and often makes a parade of what he is not possessed of. That labours for his posterity; this again leaves his offspring involved in the same necessities he was in himself at first setting out, and to extricate themselves as they can. The English Americans are adverse to war, because they have a great deal to lose; they take no care to manage the Indians from a belief that they stand in no need of them. The French youth, for very different reasons, abominate the thoughts of peace, and live well with the natives, whose esteem they easily gain in time of war, and their friendship at all times.¹⁹

As might be expected, contemporary testimony of the English commandants is not so favorable to the French as that of Charlevoix. Both Fraser²⁰ and Major Farmer,²¹ sent into the Illinois country after the colonial wars, had not been received well by the French, and they had consequently no sympathy for them. Even Croghan,²² who called the French at Vincennes "an idle lazy people, a parcel of renegadoes from Canada" and "much worse than the Indians", weakens his accusations when he also accuses them of taking "a secret pleasure" at his misfortune in being captured by the Indians. More serious, perhaps, are the criticisms made by the priests who came to minister. Gibault²³

19 Pierre Francois Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, Notes and Index by L. P. Kellogg, 2 v., Chicago (1923), I, pp. 117-8.

20 Fraser to Haldimand, May 4, 1766, IIIHC, XI, p. 32.

21 Farmer to Harrington, Mar. 19, 1766, IIIHC, XI, p. 191.

22 Croghan's Journal, June 15, 1765, IIIHC, XI, p. 227.

23 Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, pp. 534-44.

was shocked by their lawlessness and the general spread of murder and rapine, but admits that there was at that time no government in the region to enforce the law. He was not speaking of the French regime. Likewise, the later missionaries—Flaget, Rivet, Olivier and Badin—were dealing with people who had fallen into poverty, and moral and religious indifference. Symmes and, later, Thomas, who seems more impartial, while describing the decay of civilization among these French settlers, point out that they had been despoiled by capture and recapture, and by economic and social reverses. The English visitors to Vincennes during the first three decades of the nineteenth century were for the most part propagandists for or against migrations from Europe to the West. Faux²⁴ and Webly²⁵ were undoubtedly quite accurate in their descriptions of the extremes of the dance and the desecration of the Sabbath, but they were in no way desirous of extolling the virtues of the natives or the good of the country. They were endeavoring to offset the favorable writings of Birkbeck and other promoters. Volney²⁶ could not condemn the French as Frenchmen, but sought to blame their misfortunes on the fact that they had not had the blessing of the French Revolution, a rather curious assumption concerning people who had been offered the benefits of American democracy. He was a free-thinker, ready to acknowledge the refinement of Abbé Rivet but unwilling to defend his parishioners.

The other qualities of these early Frenchmen of the West stressed by American travelers are their frequent intermarriage with the Indians and their illiteracy. The friendship between the French and the Indian was not based merely on intermarriage. While the French expected to profit from the Indian trade, they were willing to live as their neighbors and share their goods. There were good and bad elements in their treatment of the Indians. French traders were no better than

²⁴ *Early Western Travels*, XI, pp. 207-19.

²⁵ *Early Western Travels*, XII, pp. 336-40.

²⁶ Constantin F. S. Comte de Volney, *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America*, tr. by C. B. Brown, Philadelphia, 1805, p. 351.

English and American fur traders in their dealing with liquor. The Jesuits, the Sulpicians and other missionaries sought in vain to keep the traders' whiskey from the Indian village, yet their worst enemies in this were those *coureurs de bois* who were beyond the restraining hand of any government. The most serious corruption of the Indian nations through the use of liquor came after the French regime, although their sad state later is not essentially different from the condition described by Charlevoix in some Indian settlements in the early eighteenth century. Liquor was not the chief power of the French over the savages. The French, coming in smaller numbers, were content to settle in villages and merely draw from the savages the furs gained in the hunt. The English and Americans came in greater numbers, determined to take the land itself for settlements and, consequently, to dispossess the Indian. For the latter the Indians were only obstacles.

To this economic attitude towards the red man must be added the religious approach, if one is to understand the friendship between the French and Indians. William Johnson²⁷ in his report to the home government stressed the influence of Jesuit missionaries who went to live with the savages, sharing the bitter trials of primitive existence. They sought to sanctify rather than change the life of the savage, striving to translate the teachings of the Church into the language and the concepts of the Indian. They had a powerful aid in the liturgy of the Catholic services which were far more attractive to these people than were the stern theological preachings of the Protestant divines. The "black robes" remained the traditional friends of the Indians of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. This friendship for the French was more than economic. Even when the English traders with English goods could undersell the French, and the French were merely selling English goods, the Indians preferred to deal with the French.

Numerous references to intermarriage, as the reason for the

²⁷ *Doc. Rel. to Colonial History of New York*, ed. by Edmund B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1856, VII, pp. 969-70.

friendliness between the French and Indians, might give us a false notion of its frequency. Of the *coureurs de bois* we have no reliable information. They were, like the outermost fringe of all frontiers, mostly refugees from society and inclined to satisfy their lusts without the bonds of matrimony. But in the regular French settlements it can be safely maintained from the marriage registers that intermarriage was not frequent. Neither the French nor the English governments favored these unions. Since the French regarded more highly the personality of the Indians, it is probably true that intermarriage with the Indians was a bit more frequent than in the English and American frontier settlements. If the French traders outside the settlements were to marry at all they had to find wives among the natives. Wherever possible these marriages were blessed by the priest, and the progeny were reared as Catholics.²⁸ Thus, we find that Richardville, Godfrey, Comparet, La Fontaine, Beaubien, Bertrand, Burnet and many other French names among the later descendants of these French traders were borne by half-breeds. Sometimes these children became as primitive as their Indian ancestors, but many became highly respectable citizens of the early towns. However, intermarriage was not the accepted practice of the French. In Vincennes, River Au Raisin and Detroit, which were in regular contact with other French settlements north and south, the baptismal registers seldom contain names of children of mixed parentage.²⁹

Volney makes a comparison between the illiteracy of the pioneer French and the literacy of the Americans in Vincennes. Rusk,³⁰ likewise, essays a comparison between the scant French literature and the early English literature of the frontier. The illiteracy of the Frenchman during the period 1790-1830 in the Indiana settlements is a fact too patent to be denied. The best assurance of this is the repeated statement of the missionaries sent to help them. But the comparison should be made between

28 Father Gabriel Marest to P. German in 1712 in *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, 4 v., ed. Paris 1838-43, I, pp. 716-20.

29 Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-7.

30 Ralph Leslie Rusk, *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, New York, 1926, I, p. 7.

these outermost French settlements and the fur-trading frontier of the American pioneer. The trappers and fur traders of no national group were book lovers. There were educated persons in the French settlements along the Mississippi, as has been shown by recent studies of old creole libraries.³¹ In the lower class, literacy was not expected. This vanguard had pushed from civilization at a time when it was difficult to take their schools with them. A second or third generation, deprived of schools and not reinforced by new and better educated immigrants, must decline. Had these settlements been constantly increased and built up by succeeding waves of immigrants from France, as were the American settlements, undoubtedly a French literature of a sort would have sprung up, as it did in Canada, and illiteracy would have given way to literate expression of the ideals and progress of the people.

The vicissitudes of the frontier life aggravated by governmental disorder were bound to have their effects on the lives of the French pioneers. They would probably have had serious consequences for any national group. The fact of survival through these vicissitudes, however, deserves recognition. In defending the French from unsympathetic criticism there is no desire to extenuate their failures. But in their failure they did not return to savagery. They constantly begged their priests to provide instruction for their children. They desired economic competency; but being impoverished, a conquered and isolated people, they could not attain their ideals. While it is impossible to praise their ignorance, or to laud their poverty, it is to their credit that they retained the essentials of their faith in adversity, and adapted themselves to a system of government that brought them only a threatened loss of their old ideals. To these negative virtues we can add their positive contribution to the Catholic Church in the Northwest.

It is true that not all the French were Catholics, and that among Catholics there were many who strayed from the fold

31 John Francis McDermott, *Private Libraries in Creole Saint Louis*, 1936. Supplement to Bulletin No. 10 of the Institut Francais de Washington, 1937, *passim*.

and never returned. Yet during the period in which the French dominated, to be religious meant to be Catholic, and among later groups the French have, in the majority of cases, been faithful to that inheritance. This Catholicism, however, was another element of their culture that was not so easily understood by American settlers who came from communities in which Catholics were comparatively unknown. Jacob Burnet's appreciation is rather typical. Speaking of the French around Lake Erie, he said that they "were extremely ignorant, and were under the influence of a strong religious superstition".³² He related that Judge Symmes, noting their great fidelity to their religious services, in his charge to the Grand Jury "endeavored to convince them that they consumed more time in the discharge of religious duty than was required by the Scriptures, or consistent with their temporal prosperity."

To the French, on the other hand, their religion was not something to be regulated by a private interpretation of the Scriptures, but was an adherence to a revealed set of doctrines, and the use of what they considered divinely instituted sacraments. These habitants suffered from the absence of priests, and some became lax in their observance of the church law; they became ignorant of many detailed tenets of their religious faith. Yet their abiding confidence that the Church would not always neglect them was a constant challenge to priest and missionary who eventually brought an organized priesthood into the Middle West.

Historical Societies in Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana have made serious efforts to bring before the world the material contribution of these permanent French settlements, but as yet the religious history of the French has not been properly recorded. When Bishop Fenwick³³ made his missionary journeys to Green Bay, Mackinac, Detroit and Saint Joseph in 1829 and 1831 he was

³² *Notes on the Early Settlement of the Northwestern Territory*, 1847, pp. 281-4.

³³ Victor F. O'Daniel, *The Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick, O.P.*, Washington (1920), pp. 357-62, 388-92.

not establishing new churches, but reviving old ones. In some of them the Indians were still at hand, as at Arbre Croche and St. Joseph, but in many the unheralded French settlers and traders constituted the nucleus of the future Church about which German, Irish, Polish, and English were to gather. And so it was in Indiana, where Vincennes was the foundation stone of Indiana Catholicism. In Fort Wayne, South Bend and other river towns it was the French who first practiced the Catholic faith.

The Catholicism of the French, moreover, did not prevent their possessing the pioneering spirit of the frontier. The differences between the manifestations of this spirit among the French and among the Americans are worthy of some consideration. In writing of the frontier in American history the notion has sometimes been given that the courage manifested on our western frontier was something peculiar to the Anglo-American.³⁴ We can grant readily that it takes a certain physical courage to leave established ways, but there is nothing in the nature of pioneer endeavor that is peculiar to any nationality. While it has been supposed that the frontier creates a democratic spirit by reducing the frontiersmen to a primitive condition of equality, the French offered an exception to the rule. Like the English, they retained the traditions of their government. They did not, moreover, return entirely to primitive conditions, for they settled for the most part in villages and built their houses according to a tradition they brought with them. Their agriculture was not advanced, but it was practically what they had had in the days when they left France. It is doubtful also whether the accepted notion of the trapper and trader fleeing before the farmer fits the Frenchmen, who seem to have settled in groups, even arranging their farms so as to bring the houses close together. Their adaptation of savage dress has been overdrawn. It is true that they had to use skins in time of necessity, but the blue of French costumes, the dress of the French women, and the practice of weaving cotton that appeared in

³⁴ Frederick J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York, 1920, p. 2.

these villages indicate that their pioneer life was as much conditioned by what they brought with them as by what they found in the wilderness. In religion this was especially true. Bond is incorrect when he says their adherence to Catholicism was merely nominal.³⁵ They experienced a declining comprehension of the dogmas of the church because their traditions were mostly oral, but there was no return to savage primitiveness, or trend toward multiplication of sects. They brought with them a clear concept of Catholicity and of faith and morals, and they planted it on the banks of the Mississippi and the shores of the Great Lakes. Their American neighbors, such as Burnet, could call this superstition, but they could not deny that while these men were pioneers, and while they faced the trials of frontier life, they preserved their old ideals. Poverty in a material way was the chief obstacle to the establishment of schools and churches and the perpetuation of the older institutions. But while this poverty did prevent the full realization of these ideals, it could not entirely destroy them or prevent a limited realization.

Those who do not believe in authoritarian religion at times fail to appreciate the religious difficulties which these frontiersmen had to overcome. Being without the aids of mass, confession and priestly instructions there was, occasionally, a wide margin between their faith and their practice; but the habitants did not deny the margin and they welcomed the approach of the priest who would lead them back to righteousness before death, and would instruct their children in the ways of God. The laxity of Catholics in morals in such communities has been attributed to Catholic teaching, because a fundamental Catholic doctrine is overlooked. The Catholic Church does not reject a sinner as lost until he dies in his sin, but seeks the sinner through the sacraments, hoping that at least before he leaves this world he will be ready to face his Maker. The sin or the sinful way is never condoned, but the way of forgiveness and repentance is always open. And while Catholic apologists wish that those who die in the Church had lived according to her laws, forgive-

³⁵ Beverley W. Bond, Jr., *The Civilization of the Old Northwest*, New York, 1934, p. 466.

ness is always awaiting the penitent. These Frenchmen knew this point of church discipline too well, and had experienced long periods in which sacramental forgiveness was denied them by the absence of priests. Yet Gibault, Flaget, Rivet, Bruté and others found a nucleus that had been fully faithful.

Seldom did they worry about the support of the priest. After all, in Catholic France that had been cared for by the government. Even the trustees of the church—chosen for personal prestige and importance rather than for sanctity—frequently refused to cooperate with the priest. But all these things can be explained on the grounds of ignorance and neglect rather than by any turning from their Catholic faith. When the period of transition had passed, and schools had been established, and the ministration and reception of the sacraments had begun again on a definite plan, the descendants of these pioneers generally came back to regular observance.

To the spirit of Catholicism in the Middle West the French pioneers contributed a sense of security that has been a source of strength in periods of popular excitement. This results from the fact that throughout the regions, where the French raised their villages, the Catholic Church has always been an accepted fact. There was never that complete ignorance of Catholic practices which existed in some of the older states of the eastern seaboard, where Catholicism had been proscribed until after the Revolution. Some descendants of these French have achieved civic and social leadership in their communities. The generality of them have united to their cherished religious tradition the characteristics of American democracy. Although, some communities have developed so compactly Protestant that the influence of the Catholic minority is unknown, they are usually off the old routes of commerce in regions never crossed by the French pioneers. On the scenes of the old French posts Catholics now are of English, German, or Slavic origin but when these later immigrants arrived in the early nineteenth century they worshipped first in the chapels erected to care for the old French habitants.

CHAPTER I

VINCENNES AT THE END OF QUEBEC RULE

WHEN Father Pierre Gibault departed from the mission of Vincennes in 1789, American rule had finally been recognized by the old French settlements, but had not yet brought order and security to the people. The "Republic of Vincennes", as Bishop Simon Bruté¹ euphemistically called the town during the absence of strict governmental regulation—French, British or American—had left its marks upon the settlement. Poverty was everywhere evident; business was almost at a standstill; and extensive farming had to be abandoned before the approach of hostile Indians who like aroused hornets² were pursuing their injudicious attackers from Kentucky. Vincennes and the Wabash Valley were about to enter the transition from a French traders' frontier to an American State and the prospects were none too encouraging.

When Vincennes and the other settlements on the Wabash were established is not certain, and, for the purposes of this study, not essential. The three most important communities—Vincennes, Ouiatenon and Fort Miami—were in existence by 1757.³ Indeed, the extant church records of Vincennes begin in 1749, but we know that prior to that time the French were beginning to fortify the Wabash-Maumee⁴ trade route. After the Fox⁵ Indians were repulsed, the Miami settled along the route about 1715. Furthermore, the Fox War had made the Fox River route dangerous. The Iroquois had become less powerful

1 *The Catholic Telegraph, Cincinnati*, IV (1835), p. 149.

2 Hamtramck to Harmar, Aug. 14, 1789, Harmar Papers, XI, WLCL.

3 Louis Antoine Bougainville's Memoir, WHSC, XVIII, pp. 167-95.

4 N. M. Miller Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana during the French Régime, 1699-1763*, New York (1916), p. 38.

5 Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1701-1799*, French Dominion, II, pp. 70, 257-9.

in these regions, and the French, anxious to keep control of the trade with the other tribes in the valley, and to ward off the approach of interested English traders, decided to establish strategic posts along the Wabash. The Wabash-Maumee waterway, therefore, became important.

These waterways of colonial times were perhaps the decisive factor in determining the location and arrangement of the early settlements of the Old Northwest. There were some land trails, especially between important centers of trade, or portages between waterways, but the difficulty of carrying large quantities of furs overland, and the impassability of many sections of the western country, made the waterways almost the sole means of transportation and communication. The French, Scotch or English trader might leave the banks of the streams for a while, but he sought the rivers and lakes to transport his furs. The Indians, who were the trappers and the original fur collectors, spent their winters in the interior where the game abounded, and the traders often had to follow the Indians to their haunts. The French, however, who settled mostly in villages, endeavored to keep the tribes about their military posts as much as possible, lest the trappers by wandering come in contact with rival fur companies. Already English fur traders had reached the Wabash⁶ in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century, and so the French decided to fortify their holdings. Stockades were established at several points on the river: at Vincennes, the site of the present city; at Ouiatenon, near what is now Lafayette; and at Fort Miami, near the present Fort Wayne. The first was in the neighborhood of the Piankeshaws' villages, the second in the neighborhood of the Weas or Ouias, and the third in the heart of the Miami.⁷ The fort on the St. Joseph,⁸ which

⁶ Rowland and Sanders, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 183, 513.

⁷ Oscar J. Craig, *Ouiatenon, a Study in Indiana History*, IHSP, II, pp. 319-48.

⁸ George Pare, "The St. Joseph Mission," MVHR, XVII, pp. 24-54; Beeson, L. H., "Fort St. Joseph, the Mission, Trading Post and Fort," MPHC, XXVIII, pp. 179 ff.

had been established earlier, while not in the region now called Indiana, had influence over the Potawatomi in the northern section of the present state. As to government, the southern part of the state, including Vincennes, came under the jurisdiction of New Orleans.⁹ The northern part above what is now Terre Haute was under Quebec. These four forts had about them small settlements, but the chief occupation of the settlers was trade in furs.

Outside the French settlements among the Indian nations were wanderers called *coureurs de bois*,¹⁰ sometimes pictured as valiant woodsmen, but more often, and perhaps more truly, as a lower type of adventurous trader who left the settlements, lived with the Indians, often married them in some fashion, and in many respects became almost savage. Their numbers no one will ever know. The French government sought to restrain them and denied them permits to trade, partly because they were lawless, and partly because they were liable to trade with enemy fur companies. It was from these wanderers that most of the half breeds found later in the northern part of the state had descended. After the destruction of Fort St. Joseph and the disappearance of white settlements in that neighborhood, they were the only Frenchmen left in the region.¹¹

Of the French population in these settlements in the year 1789 we have no official census. Ouiatenon,¹² as a French settlement, disappeared at the opening of the period, although Wilkinson,¹³ who destroyed the village in 1791, mentions some books and papers in the French language that were found in the Indian habitations before they were destroyed. Likewise Fort Miami, now Fort Wayne, seems to have been wiped out during the In-

9 Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1769, Gage Papers, English Series XIII, WLCL.

10 George Pare, "The St. Joseph Mission," MVHR, XVII, p. 52.

11 *Ibid.*

12 O. J. Craig, *loc. cit.*

13 William Henry Smith, *The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair. The St. Clair Papers*, 2 v., Cleveland, 1882, II, pp. 233-9.

dian wars, but it was re-established by later French traders from Detroit after the War of 1812. Fort St. Joseph, the victim of Pontiac and of other attacks during the Revolution, seems to have lost its French population before 1780. The history of Vincennes, however, is continuous throughout the period of English and early American control.

In the Memoir of Bougainville¹⁴ concerning the fur trade and trading centers on the Wabash, written in 1757, the Post of the Miami and Ouiatenon are listed merely as military posts, the former in charge of Bellestre,¹⁵ lieutenant, and the latter of Camet Bayeul, ensign, while Vincennes is described as a pretty village. A census of these posts made apparently in 1760¹⁶ gives twelve names of the inhabitants of Fort Ouiatenon and nine for Fort Miami. These names are apparently of heads of families, if we may judge by the list for Fort St. Vincents on the Ouabache which gives only 66 names with the note that there are about "fifty women and One Hundred and Fifty children belonging to the inhabitants and fifty men able to bear arms including servants." What became of these Frenchmen of the north does not appear. As late as the Christmas of 1780 the journal of Henry Hay¹⁷ speaks of certain French settlers at Fort Miami and of mass being said in the family of one of the men mentioned in the census of 1760. But subsequent Indian wars led to the destruction of the Indian villages and the French settlers seem to have gone elsewhere, some to Detroit and to Canada. General Charles Scott¹⁸ in his early reports of the Indian wars says that the French had previously abandoned Ouia-

14 WHSC, XVIII, pp. 167-9.

15 Francois-Marie Picot de Bellestre (1717-1785), cf. T. St. Pierre, *Histoire des Canadiens du Michipin*, Montreal (1805), pp. 130-41.

16 *The First Census of Indiana*, IHSP, II, pp. 439-40.

17 Milo M. Quaife, *Fort Wayne in 1790*, IHSP, VII, pp. 310-5.

18 A.S.P., *Indian Affairs*, I, p. 131. Typed copy of the Journal of General Charles Scott's expedition against the Indians May 23 to June 10, 1791, Clark Papers, MHSC.

tenon, but he gives no indication as to where they had gone. Some fled to Vincennes after Scott had destroyed their village.¹⁹

At Vincennes Bougainville in his 1757²⁰ memoir, mentions seventy-five "habitants who till the soil and harvest the grain" besides the commandant and his troops. Croghan²¹ estimated the number as 80 or 90 French families. Fraser,²² writing to Haldimand, May 4, 1766, says there were about sixty farmers in the village. General Gage,²³ quoting Captain Forbes to Lord Hillsborough in 1767, estimated the inhabitants, men, women and children as 232, strangers 168, negro slaves 10, Indian slaves 17. The census of 1769, as we mentioned above, gave Vincennes a population of approximately 250. A list of those claiming to hold land by reason of a grant under the former regimes contains 88 names.²⁴ After the arrival of American troops a distinction was made between the old French families and the American settlers. Harmar writing on August 7, 1787,²⁵ estimated the "number of inhabitants about nine hundred (souls) French, and about four hundred (souls) Americans." In the reports to the Continental Congress on the number of male inhabitants in Illinois in 1787,²⁶ Post Vincennes is said to have 520 French and 103 Americans. John C. Symmes writing from Vincennes June 22, 1790,²⁷ says he has been informed the village consists of 330 families, but that he does not believe the report. A census of the French inhabitants of Vincennes among

19 Henry Vanderburgh to Arthur St. Clair, July 14, 1791, OSLC.

20 WHSC, XVIII, pp. 167-95.

21 Croghan's Journal, June 15, 1765, IIIHC, XI, p. 227.

22 Fraser to Haldimand, May 4, 1766, IIIHC, XI, p. 32.

23 IHSP, II, pp. 421-4.

24 Census of Vincennes 1767, IIIHC, XI, p. 469; Also Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1769, Gage Papers, English Series XIII, WLCL.

25 Harmar Papers, Letter Book B, Letter lxxviii, WLCL.

26 Enumeration of the Male Inhabitants, French and Americans of Post Vincennes and the Illinois, IIIHC, V, p. 449.

27 *The Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*, ed. by Beverley W. Bond, New York, 1926, p. 287.

the papers of Winthrop Sargent gives a total of 688, not counting 17 negroes and about 50 who were absent.²⁸ The estimates range from about 700 to 1300 inhabitants, depending upon the inclusion or exclusion of the Americans and allowing for fluctuations in population for various reasons.

Several factors enter into these estimates to prevent an accurate knowledge of the number of French remaining in the settlements about Vincennes in 1789. In considering the earlier estimates it must be remembered that participation in the wars undoubtedly took some lives, although the French²⁹ seemed for years to be immune from Indian attack. More important was the movement of dissatisfied settlers into Spanish and French territory. Some may have gone back to Canada. As Vincennes was considered more in the sphere of New Orleans, and as the French were entreated to immigrate by the Spanish governor on the promise of free lands and the opportunity to practice their religion, some did cross the Mississippi. Vincennes does not seem to have lost as many inhabitants as the other villages in the Illinois country, but Hamtramck, writing to Harmar on April 14, 1791,³⁰ says "about 250 souls have this spring gone from our village to L'Ance à la graise on the Spanish side." We are not certain that these were all French, as the settlement he mentions was being organized by Colonel George Morgan and has become known³¹ as New Madrid. While it received many American settlers, we know that some French went, because their names are contained in the extant records.³² They sought

28 Winthrop Sargent Papers, *Number of French Inhabitants*, Box 15, OSAHS.

29 Bishop Bruté in *The Catholic Telegraph*, Cincinnati, (1835), IV, p. 117; Hamtramck to Wyllys, May 26, 1789, Harmar Papers, X, WLCL.

30 Hamtramck to Harmar, April 14, 1791, Harmar Papers, XIV, WLCL.

31 Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri Under the Spanish Régime*, 1908, II, p. 145; Max Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, New York, 1932, p. 227; Joseph Tasse, *Les Canadiens de l'Ouest*, 4th ed., Montreal, 1882, p. xii.

32 New Madrid Archives, Vol. I, MHSC.

new settlements because the drought and floods were making life difficult in Vincennes at that time. Furthermore, the Indians were quite hostile.

The difficulty of enumerating these wandering bands of Indians need not trouble the historian of Catholic activities in Indiana. There were Potawatomi in the north, Kickapoos along the Vermillion River, Ouias or Weas at Ouiatenon and near them Twightwees, a branch of the Miami. Near Fort Miami were the principal groups of Miami. South of them were the Delawares, and further south the Shawnees and a group of Mascoutens. The Piankeshaws were south of Vincennes.³³ Very few of the Indians in the state at that early period seem to have come under the influence of the missionaries. Of the Potawatomi, those in the northern part of the state had received the ministrations of the Jesuits from the old St. Joseph mission,³⁴ and retained favorable recollections of them generations later. There is no evidence that those living nearer the Wabash were ever effectively reached by the missionaries. Of the Wabash Indians proper there are occasional baptisms listed in the register, but the visits of the missionaries were primarily for the white settlers and members of the military force. Spalding³⁵ doubts that many of these Indians ever became Christians.

The Wabash settlements were established after the work recorded in the *Jesuit Relations*, and, while the *Lettres Édifiantes* mention some work among the Illinois, there is little indication that these later missionaries tackled the job of converting the Miami of the Wabash. The numbers and descriptions of the tribes of Indians differ from time to time, because, with the retreat of the redman before the advancing white frontier, remnants of eastern tribes entered the region. The Delawares, for

33 Samuel R. Brown, *The Western Gazateer or Emigrant's Directory*, Auburn, N. Y., 1817, pp. 71-2; Frederick Webb Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, 2 vols., Washington, 1907.

34 George Pare, "The St. Joseph Mission," MVHR, XVII, pp. 24-54; For the Baptismal register cf. MVHR, XIII, pp. 201-39.

35 Martin J. Spalding, *Life of Flaget*, p. 43.

instance,³⁶ had received Christian instruction from the Moravian missionaries in Pennsylvania. The Shawnees, fiercest of all in attacking the whites, seem not to have come under the influence of the Jesuit missionaries.

Of the numbers of these tribes we have only estimates. Hamtramck,³⁷ in his report to Harmar from Post Vincennes on May 6th, 1788,³⁸ estimated the Indians on the Wabash and at the Maumee as 1290 men as follows: "At the Highland [apparently Terre Haute] 30 men, Vermillion 200, Wyahtenaws 300, Kickapoos opposite the Wyah 100, the Isle River 150, Maumee 350, Grand Elkhart 100, Little Elkhart 60." Later, Oct. 13, 1788,³⁹ he added in a letter to Harmar. "Some days ago I received a message from the Potawatomi who live on the River St. Joseph, they consist of about 200 warriors. They offer to come under the protection of the United States and to be employed to make war against the Wabash Indians." The total Indian fighting population of the state at that date would have been approximately fifteen hundred warriors. What that would mean in total population does not seem to have been a subject of speculation at that time.

The third class of people in these settlements may be roughly grouped as Americans. Of the number of Americans at Vincennes in these early times there is no accepted figure. It is certain that American traders, such as the agents of George Morgan,⁴⁰ were doing business with the Indians before 1789. That there were also some vagabonds from civilization in this frontier settlement we have no reason to doubt. As soon as the

³⁶ Charles N. Thompson, *Sons of the Wilderness*, John and William Connor, IHSP, XII, (1937), pp. 42-6.

³⁷ George B. Catlin, "Colonel John Francis Hamtramck," IMH, XXVI, (1930), pp. 237-53.

³⁸ Hamtramck to Harmar, May 16, 1788, Harmar Papers II, WLCL.

³⁹ Hamtramck to Harmar, Oct. 13, 1788, Harmar Papers II, WLCL; Similar figures are contained on a letter of Arthur St. Clair to the Secretary of War, Aug. 18, 1790, St. Clair Papers, OSLC.

⁴⁰ Savelle, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

American military forces began to assume the work of protecting this distant frontier, other Americans accompanying and including the troops, are to be found in the settlement. The Report of the Continental Congress in 1787⁴¹ lists 103 American males as living in the settlement. Harmar, in his report to the Secretary of War, estimated the Americans as 400⁴² souls. Of the Americans who were settling along the Ohio River we have no definite figures for this early period. Settlers were pushing up the White Water Valley, into Clark's settlement, and across the Ohio from Louisville. But during this early period of history the influence of this group in the south on Catholicism in the state was negligible.

The French Commandant of the Post Vincennes from 1736 to 1764 was Louis St. Ange de Bellerive.⁴³ After the Seven Years War he left Vincennes and became commandant of the chief post of the Illinois country at Fort Chartres where, in October, 1765,⁴⁴ he surrendered the government of the Illinois country to the English representative. Whatever government existed in the Illinois country during the British regime exerted little power over the settlements on the Wabash. David Abbott was in charge from May, 1777 to February, 1778.⁴⁵ Land grants during this period were signed by St. Marie and Chapard as commandants, but by what authority they issued them⁴⁶ is not clear. The outbreak of the Revolutionary War prevented the application of the Quebec Act of 1774, and instead of a restoration of order the settlement was treated to capture and recapture

41 IIIHC, V, p. 449.

42 Harmar to the Secretary of War, Aug. 7, 1787, Letter Book B, Letter lxxviii, WLCL.

43 IHSP, II, pp. 407-8 and 429-30; *Bulletin de L'Institut Francais de Washington*, no. 10, Dec. 1937, Supplement, pp. 44-5.

44 Joseph Wallace, *The History of Illinois and Louisiana under French Rule*, Cincinnati, 1893, pp. 360-1.

45 Robert L. Schuyler, *The Transition in Illinois from British to American Government*, New York, 1909, pp. 32-3; Hamilton to Carleton, April 25, 1778, MPHC, Vol. IX, p. 434.

46 IHSP, II, pp. 425-7.

by George Rogers Clark and Colonel Henry Hamilton. In December, 1778, Virginia created the County of Illinois, and Governor Patrick Henry the following year⁴⁷ appointed John Todd governor, with the title of Colonel and County Lieutenant. Todd's activity in the government of Vincennes consisted chiefly in setting up "A Court for the District of Vincennes" and appointing to this court "1. P. Legras; 2. Francois Bosseron; 3. Perrot; 4. Cardinal (refused to serve); 5. Guery La Tulippe; 6. R. Gamelin; 7. Edeline; 8. Dejenet; 9. Barron; Legrand Clerke:—Sheriff". The military officers appointed by Todd are recorded as follows: "Militia officers of St. Vincennes: P. Legras, L. Col; F. Bosseron, major; Latulippe, 1 capt.; Edeline 2; W. Brouilet, 3; P. Gamelin, 4; (rank of last two) not settled, Goden 2 Lieut.; Goden 3 Lieut.; Joseph Rougas, 2—Richerville, 3—Richerville 4—."⁴⁸ In the absence of any other commandants Legras and Bosseron wielded the chief civil power of the settlement until the arrival of Major John Francis Hamtramck with regular American troops in 1787. Of the condition of Vincennes in 1786⁴⁹ Father Gibault painted a very dismal picture; anarchy had resulted from the lack of a suitable government.

Congress had sent the troops of Major Hamtramck as part of the forces of Colonel Josiah Harmar to protect the settlement from the plundering of Kentucky "banditti"⁵⁰ who, under the pretence of fighting Indians, had demanded grain and meat and other provisions from the village and had plundered some of the stores under the plea that they were despoiling Spanish mer-

47 F. Bosseron and Others to Acting Governor Sargent, July 3, 1790, TPUS, II, p. 283.

48 Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana, a Redemption from Slavery*, Boston, 1905, pp. 156-7; *Chicago Historical Collections*, IV, pp. 295-6.

49 Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, pp. 534-44.

50 Josiah Harmar to Col. LeGras and Major Bosseron, June 19, 1787, Harmar Letter Book B, Letter lxxx, WLCL.

chants.⁵¹ With the restoration of order by Major Hamtramck the village was still in a sad condition. In the first place the citizens who had raised provisions for Clark's army,⁵² had accepted the continental currency at its face value in Spanish dollars, and had lost severely in the subsequent devaluation. Colonel Todd had even imprisoned those who later refused this currency. To the losses from these causes, the pillaging⁵³ of the Kentucky militia and other wanderers had added new sufferings. As if this were not enough, the association of the villagers with Americans, who were engaged in intermittent conflict with the Indians,⁵⁴ had lost for them their fur trade and had caused an abandonment of extensive agriculture. It is not surprising, then, that subsequent floods,⁵⁵ droughts and frosts should reduce the settlement to the verge of actual starvation.

During the French rule the chief officer in the village had been the commandant. Land grants⁵⁶ were made in his name, and disputes were settled by him without the formalities of jury trial. The French were so accustomed to a rule imposed by

51 *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, IV, (1884), p. 202; John Rice Jones to Arthur St. Clair, May 11, 1790, St. Clair Papers, OSLC; George Rogers Clarke to William Clarke, Sept. 1, 1791, Clarke Papers, MHSC; Leonard C. Helderman, "The Northwest Expedition of George Rogers Clark, 1786-87," MVHR, XXV, pp. 317-34, and by the same author, "Danger on Wabash, Vincennes Letters of 1786," IMH, XXXIV, pp. 456-67.

52 Edward G. Mason, *Early Chicago and Illinois: Chicago Historical Soc. Coll.*, IV, Letter of Col. John Todd to Col. P. LeGras, Aug. 2, 1779, and Lieut. Col. J. M. P. LeGras to Gov. of Virginia, May 22, 1780; Robert L. Schuyler, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-8.

53 Smith, *St. Clair*, St. Clair to the Secretary of State, II, pp. 398-9.

54 Smith, *St. Clair*, Letter from Secretary of War to Col. Harmar, April 26, 1787, II, p. 22 n.; Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV, p. 117; Petition of the Inhabitants of Post Vincennes to Congress, July 26, 1787, TPUS, II, pp. 58-60; Constantin Volney, *View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America*, tr. by Brown, Philadelphia, 1804, p. 334.

55 Report of Gov. St. Clair to the Secretary of State, Feb. 10, 1791, TPUS, II, p. 325.

56 Petition to Congress by the Inhabitants of Knox County, Aug. 17, 1797, TPUS, II, p. 620-1; F. Bosseron and others to the Acting Governor Sargent, July 3, 1790, TPUS, II, pp. 282-3.

higher authority that, when the French control was withdrawn, they awaited a new commandant instead of setting up a substitute government in imitation of the American frontiersmen. They were quite willing to submit to English and American forms, but they lacked the initiative of people accustomed to democratic processes of government. Under such circumstances they were left without legal protection and guidance and they blamed their losses and subsequent poverty on the failure of the United States⁵⁷ to provide adequate protection for their property. There were other causes than the lack of political control, however, that operated against them, the chief of which was the change in their occupations.

The business of the early French in the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes was trade⁵⁸ in furs. The French government granted monopolies of this trade and sought to rule its colonies for the benefit of the monopolists.⁵⁹ It was shortly before the final struggle between the French and the English for the Ohio Valley that the fur trade of the Wabash reached its greatest value. Bougainville⁶⁰ estimated the quantity of the annual fur returns from the "Post of the Miamis" (Fort Wayne), chiefly among "the 'Miamis and Tépissimeaux' as 250 to 500 packages." From "Ouaténons" in ordinary years he estimated the return "as four hundred and fifty packages." The trade at Vincennes among the "Peanguichias" produced about eighty packages. For these furs sundry goods and brandy

57 Memorial of Barthelmi Tardiveau, March 18, 1788, TPUS, II, pp. 467-8; Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-7; Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1796, 8BD5, AAB.

58 Bougainville Memoir, WHSC, XVIII, pp. 167-95; Victor G. H. Collot, *A Journey in North America*, tr. by J. Christian Bay, Firenze, 1924, 2 v., I, pp. 180-1; Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana from its earliest explorations to 1859*, Indianapolis, 1915, p. 25; Charles Lasselle, "The Old Indian Traders of Indiana," IMH, II, pp. 1 ff.; Rivet to (Harrison) Mar. 26, 1802, copy in VPR; Wayne E. Stevens, *The Northwest Fur Trade 1763-1800*, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, XIV, pp. 52, 56.

59 Francis Parkman, *The Old Régime in Canada*, Boston, 1875, pp. 289-96.

60 WHSC, XVIII, pp. 176-195.

were exchanged. The profit from the trade was enormous because the Indians had no sense of the value of their furs, nor of the relative values of the goods and trinkets they received in return. Even after the competition of the English had entered into the western field along the Ohio Valley, the French found that they could buy the English goods and yet sell them to the Indians for skins at a profit.

Long before Major Hamtramck arrived at Vincennes several factors were destroying the fur trade of the Wabash Valley. The most important was the increasing hostility between the Indians and the whites. For some time the Indians exempted the French from this feeling, but as the French, now become Americans, were forced to take sides with their fellow-citizens, they too became objects of threats and then attacks. Furthermore, the Revolution, by separating the Illinois country from Canada, cut off the Vincennes⁶¹ merchants from the cheaper British goods, and prevented them from competing successfully with those merchants of the North who were in constant connection with the British. To these causes of decline must be added the depletion of the fur supply, both by the destruction of game and by the disturbed condition of the region during the constant warfare.

The citizens of Vincennes recognized in these conditions an important cause of their poverty, and in their petition to Congress for land grants on July 26, 1787 they cited their "decreasing peltry trade"⁶² as one of the reasons why they were forced to seek land for farming or some other kind of occupation. The correspondence of the times between the merchants of Detroit and Vincennes⁶³ shows that the chief firms were well aware of the precarious nature of their trade and were seeking more prosperous fields or new businesses. The poor French of Vin-

61 C. B. Coleman, "Letters from Eighteenth Century Indiana Merchants," IMH, V, p. 149; Todd and McGill to John Askin, *Burton Historical Records*, Vol. I, John Askin Papers, Vol. I, p. 278.

62 TPUS, II, pp. 58-60.

63 Coleman, *loc. cit.*

cennes found few business opportunities which, by nature and training, they could embrace, and the decline of the fur trade became an irreparable loss to them. When the wars had ceased and the Indians were leaving the country, the furs were too scarce and the incoming settlers were turning the land into more profitable and permanent uses. To their dismay the French learned that the land, which they might have had at will, was no longer free. They had even neglected to secure proper titles to the plots upon which they lived.

How extensive farming had been in the vicinity of Vincennes, we do not know.⁶⁴ Croghan had spoken of wheat and tobacco. Some cotton was raised for cloth, and some grapes for wine. But now the wars had made it unsafe for settlers to farm at any distance from the village. There are many tales of murders committed⁶⁵ by the Indians upon those whom they caught unprepared in the fields. Guards were posted to protect workers, but even this precaution often failed before the stealth of hostile tribes. To add to their misery there had been in 1790 and 1791 crop failures and floods which literally reduced the villagers to starvation.⁶⁶ Hamtramck reports the death of villagers who, driven by their hunger to eating roots of trees, had been poisoned by this unwholesome food.

The description of the farming tools⁶⁷ of early Vincennes is not impressive, unless we remember that agriculture had made little progress in America at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when these settlers started for Vincennes. The French

⁶⁴ IIIHC, XI, p. 229.

⁶⁵ Bruté, in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 117; Harmar Papers, Hamtramck to Harmar, April 11, 1789, Hamtramck to Wyllys, May 26, 1787, XI, Hamtramck to Harmar, Aug. 3, 1790, XIII, Jan. 25, 1791, XIV, WLCL.

⁶⁶ Hamtramck to Harmar, Mar. 17, 1790, Harmar Papers XII, WLCL; Smith, *St. Clair*, St. Clair to Secretary of War, May 1, 1790, II, p. 140.

⁶⁷ John Reynolds, *The Pioneer History of Illinois*, 2ed., Chicago, 1887, pp. 68-70; Jacob Burnet, *Notes on the Early Settlement of the Northwestern Territory*, Cincinnati, 1847, pp. 281-2; Esarey, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5; Joseph Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-7.

used a large plow with a wooden mould-board mounted on two wheels, one large one for the furrow and a smaller one for the unplowed side. It was usually drawn by oxen. Their chief mode of travel was a two-wheeled cart. Their chief crops were wheat, corn and tobacco. Some idea of the former prosperity of the village can be gained from the report of Captain Forbes to General Gage⁶⁸ shortly after the English had taken over the Illinois country. Forbes speaks of 352 oxen, 588 cows, 250 horses, 295 hogs, 3 mills, 5,450 bushels of corn to be reaped, 5,240 bushels of Indian corn to be reaped and 36,360 pounds net of tobacco growing.

The French arrangement of fields was different from that of the ordinary American frontiersman. As the French tended to settle in villages, they had common fields—usually long strips—and common lands for grazing. The fence to keep the stock out of the fields was built not around the fields, but around the village “commons”, and the cost of erecting this fence was shared by those whose fields bordered on the “commons”.⁶⁹ The “commons” remained in Vincennes⁷⁰ after Indiana had achieved territorial government.

Considering the physical sufferings and losses of the population of Vincennes it is not difficult to understand its social decline. In the first place it was a pioneer community in which the institutions of established society were few. Not many of the upper classes left France for Canada; fewer left Canada for the fur-trading regions. The majority of the settlers around the French posts, in addition to the soldiers and their families, were what is called in Canada “habitants”,⁷¹ a name preferred by them to “peasants,” because they owned their lands and because they intended to live their lives in the land of their adoption.

68 Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1769, Gage Papers, English Series, XIII, WLCL.

69 *Recueil des regles etc. de la fabrique*, VPR; Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-6.

70 Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV, (1835), p. 117.

71 Pierre Georges Roy, “La Paroisse et l’habitant Canadien sous le Régime Français,” CHR, XVIII, p. 474; Francis Parkman, *The Old Régime in Canada*, 1875, p. 252.

Generally speaking they had no schools, and children were taught in the home, or by the resident missionary. It is significant to find in the early parish registers, that more were able to sign their names, and that they wrote with better penmanship, than in the later period of suffering and poverty. Books were not unknown, for Gibault boasted of his readings to his bishop. The libraries found among the creoles of early Saint Louis⁷² will permit an opinion that the better families of the same day in Vincennes probably had some French imprints. But there was no newspaper, and no printing press. When the early missionaries and the vanguard of American settlers came, they found few of the inhabitants who could read or write. Even some of the judges, who conducted the temporary courts, had to make their mark on documents prepared by the notaries Antoine and Pierre Gamelin.

In the midst of this gloom we find these French settlers not depressed, but jubilant. Even the stern missionary priests almost despaired of doing anything for their neglected brethren who were so fond of song and dance. The songs frequently told of fabulous animals of the woods⁷³ and of early adventures of the village, but usually they were the sort appreciated by the boatmen from New Orleans. There must have been a variety of entertainment at their evening gatherings because young and old attended, and even those worn with the day's work seldom failed to appear at the evening's frolic. Other pleasures of these simple people were fishing and hunting. As to drinking, while they had no prejudice against intoxicants, the most reliable witnesses say that they seldom indulged to excess.

For their dances and festivals the men, and⁷⁴ especially the

⁷² John Francis McDermott, "Private Libraries in Creole St. Louis", Supplement, *Bulletin de l'Institut Francais de Washington*, no. 10, December, 1937.

⁷³ Ms., *The Creole (French) Pioneers at Old Post Vincennes*, Federal Writers Project, Dist. No. 5, pp. 34 ff.

⁷⁴ Reynolds, *Pioneer History*, p. 71; Reynolds, *My Own Times, embracing also the History of my Life*, 1855, p. 64; Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 497-8; Esarey, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4.

women, tried to wear attractive costumes. Before the interruption of commerce, when better dresses could be had from the "city"—in this case New Orleans—the women of the village were quick to add to their raiment. The men varied little their adopted dress. Reynolds says they seemed to have a strong predilection for blue. Blue handkerchiefs instead of hats were generally worn on the head by both men and women. The capot of white blanket was the almost universal dress of the laboring people. A kind of cap, allowed to rest on the shoulders when not in use, was attached for covering the head out of doors in cold weather. When they had cloth the men wore coarse blue pantaloons. Buckskins were popular in winter. The garments for outdoors in coldest weather were of a thicker and coarse leather. The children wore simple garments until they were old enough to have small editions of the clothes of their elders.

Their homes shared the qualities of their dress, in a combination of peculiarity and primitiveness. Nearly all the houses were of logs,⁷⁵ laid, not horizontally, as the American pioneer built, but vertically, with a double row of puncheons planted upright in the ground, the intervening spaces filled with a mortar of mud and sticks or straw, and frequently covered with a crude whitewash. Roofs were sometimes thatched, sometimes of bark. Houses were generally one story in height with a loft above lighted by dormer windows. The rooms, except sleeping rooms, were heated by open fireplaces. The doors were of hewed logs.⁷⁶ The furniture was very simple and spare, occasionally including wardrobes, tables and rush-bottomed chairs. The bed was usually made of rope network on which were placed feather mattresses. Under the larger bed was a trundle bed for the children. The streets of the village on which these houses faced ran at right angles, and the chapel stood on the plot still occupied for this purpose along the river, not quite facing the fort.

⁷⁵ John Cleves Symmes to Robert Norris, June 22, 1790, *Correspondence* ed. by Bond, p. 288.

⁷⁶ MS. *The Creole (French) Pioneers*, p. 29.

The fields of the habitants were fenced off from the commons according to their peculiar custom.

Of all the social customs of these early French the one that stands out most prominently, the one that was to cause the most concern to the visiting missionaries, was dancing. It was the chief recreation of the village.⁷⁷ Practically everyone danced. They did not know waltzes or the mazurka, but the good old-fashioned contre-dance, with an occasional Court Minuet.⁷⁸ The music was furnished by the violin. Most important of these dances was the King Ball celebration combining the New Year and the Christmas and Epiphany season. To the watchful eyes of the priests the dance was an occasion of evil because indulged in so frequently and for such long hours. Then, too, it seems that those older persons who undertook to supervise the dances were sometimes lax, and dangers to the morals of the younger dancers crept in. The dances before Sunday and the eves of feasts lasted far too long for the proper observance of the holy day that followed.

One feature of early Vincennes, regretted by Bishop Bruté, was the existence of slavery.⁷⁹ This slavery was of two kinds: that of Indians, copied from the Indians themselves who made slaves of those captured in war, particularly the Pawnees; and that of blacks, which was apparently introduced by the French. Slavery in these settlements, however, lacked the severe regimen later associated with the institution in the South. The French of the Illinois treated the red men and the black men with a certain fellowship, in keeping with the French temperament. Their servants worked with them and could obtain their freedom. A tradition asserts that they had to be free before

⁷⁷ Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786. AAQ, tr. IIIHC, V, p. 543; Reynolds, *Pioneer History*, pp. 71-2; *My Own Times*, p. 62; Rivet to Carroll, Mar. 2, 1796, 8BDI, Aug. 8, 1797, 8BEI, AAB.

⁷⁸ Henry Cauthorne, *A History of the City of Vincennes from 1702 to 1901*. Vincennes, 1901, p. 41; Judge Wilson Primm, "New Year's Day in the Olden Time of St. Louis," MHSC, Vol. II, No. 1, Jan., 1900, pp. 12-22.

⁷⁹ St. Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-4; Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 150.

marriage, because the Catholic Church's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage would not permit marriage when it could be broken up by the arbitrary will of another. That slavery really played an important part in their life is open to question. They had neither large-scale farming nor large businesses in which to employ these slaves. Their services must have been mostly domestic. Both black and red slaves are occasionally entered on the baptismal register of early Vincennes, thus indicating that the slaves enjoyed at least a spiritual equality. That baptismal register hints at many social traits of the village.

While one government disappeared and another came in a new form, and while the economic and social conditions of Vincennes were upset by poverty and conquest, the religious faith of these French remained the same. That fact alone indicates that religious belief must have been the most sacred thing of all for them. It was not a mere accident that the oath to the American government was taken in the old church, as the chief public building. Religion was the bulwark of their civilization,⁸⁰ the power that kept them from the savagery of their primitive surroundings.

So careful were those engaged in colonization as to the religious belief of emigrants to New France that even in the distant settlements, such as those on the Wabash, we can speak of the French as good or bad Catholics, without considering the possibility of their being Huguenots. Their faith in the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, and, in general, their lack of interest in other faiths, marks them at once as a cultural group distinct from the English settlers. In their approach to religion they presumed an absolute truth which the believer might accept or reject, but which he could not modify by his own religious experience. For them there was no choice of doctrines or of churches, but the acceptance or rejection of the one universal religion and Church, presided over by the Pope, with a visible organization as guardian of revealed truth and dispenser of the sacraments. With their

⁸⁰ Reynolds, *Pioneer History*, pp. 54 ff.; Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 60.

religious faith settled, they only had to solve the problem of obtaining divine grace by the Church's sacraments. They did not look for signs of predestination, but relied rather upon the grace of the sacraments to keep them in the friendship of God and to obtain for them forgiveness of their sins and the rewards of heaven. Above all, to these early French, religion was an essential thing in life, as necessary even as civil government. Consequently its material support was to be provided for by the government, just as today Americans expect civic maintenance of public hygiene. This attitude towards religion led to two rather diverse results. The settlers failed to understand that they should pay the costs of supporting the church institutions, and, at the same time, they tended to regard themselves as Catholics so long as they believed the doctrines of the Church and submitted to her sacraments. With the frequent absence of the priests, and the almost total want of religious instruction, the finer points of religious faith, such as the need of constant sacramental aid, and the obligation of obeying the precept of the Church became obscure and vague in the minds of these pioneers, struggling with the more easily perceived problems of a physical existence.

During the very early days of the settlements at Vincennes there is no evidence of a resident pastor, but it is believed that the first records of priestly ministration, those of Father Sebastian Meurin, S.J.⁸¹ in 1749, were preceded by other ministrations. He and his confreres of the Society of Jesus continued to care for the mission until 1763, when the Jesuits were driven from the mission field, only Father Meurin of the whole group of Jesuits remaining in the Illinois Country. The dismissal of the Jesuits was an almost fatal blow to the Catholic Indian missions, and a severe handicap to all Catholic activities in the Mississippi Valley for nearly fifty years; for without their zeal the Church found it difficult, and on many occasions impossible, to care for the scattered faithful. In time the Sul-

81 (Henry Cauthorne), *History of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 90-93.

picians, the Capuchins, the Vincentians, and valiant secular priests came to work their fields, but the shock was so sudden that many years of opportunity were lost and the fruit of earlier labors endangered.

Father Meurin⁸² did what he could, but it was physically impossible for him to care for all the scattered missions. Vincennes was practically neglected. Finally on the 22nd of April, 1767,⁸³ the habitants under the leadership of the Commandant St. Marie sent a letter to the bishop of Quebec complaining that they had been neglected for five years and asking for a priest. Bishop Olivier Briand, then bishop of Quebec, asked Father Pierre Gibault who had been sent on May 13, 1768,⁸⁴ to the Illinois missions with the powers of Vicar General, and who was then residing at Cahokia, to go in answer to their plea. Gibault went to Vincennes in the autumn of 1769 and wrote to Briand in October of his visit. The people were overcome with emotion at this first visitation in seven years. Gibault, too, was much impressed as he wrote to the Bishop:

After nearly seven years that it has been deprived of priests everything is lax, and free thinking and irreverence has come in; nevertheless, upon my arrival all the people came in crowds to receive me at the shore of the Wabash river. Some threw themselves on their knees without being able to speak, others spoke only with sobs: some cried, 'My father, save us, we are at the edge of hell;' others said, 'God has not forsaken us yet, for it is he who sends you to us to make us repent of our sins.' Some said, 'Oh sir, why did you not come a month ago? Then my poor wife, my dear

82 Meurin to the Bishop of Quebec, Mar. 23, 1767, AAQ; Phillibert to the Bishop of Quebec, April 6, 1767, tr. in *IllHC*, XI, pp. 555-6.

83 St. Marit(e) and others to Bishop Pontbriand, April 6, 1767, AAQ; F. Simple Bocquet to Bishop of Quebec, May 12, 1767, AAQ.

84 Briand to Gibault, May 13, 1768, UNDA; First draft of Briand's answer to St. Marie's letter, attached to St. Marie's letter, AAQ; Bishop of Quebec to Bishop Bruté, Feb. 23, 1839 on Vincennes history, copy in *Hailandiere Notes*, UNDA.

father, my dear mother, my poor child would not have died without the Sacrament.’⁸⁵

The faith of many of these neglected people was still fervent. Continued neglect, repeated absences were to chill their fervor, and later priests were to meet a reception less warm, sometimes almost cold. Gibault found in the village a wooden church, which he ordered rebuilt. In addition there was a parsonage, a beautiful orchard, a garden and some other land set aside for whatever curé might come. He noted about eight hundred persons “who desired to have a priest.”⁸⁶

Although Gibault was not yet able to take up his residence, he continued to visit them when his work at the other missions of the Illinois country permitted. Father Louis Payet,⁸⁷ who had been active in mission work about Detroit, found time, while relieved by Father Hubert,⁸⁸ to visit and care for Vincennes. Otherwise, until Gibault was free to return in 1785, the public notary Phillibert performed the baptisms, and recorded them and the marriages in the church records.

On the occasion of one of his visits to Vincennes Father Gibault rendered a very great service to the cause of American Independence by his cooperation with George Rogers Clark in the capture of the village. Clark had already captured Kaskaskia, and was looking forward to Vincennes and Detroit. Gibault, who was at Kaskaskia at the time, apparently offered to assist Clark in so far as his priestly character allowed. Accompanied by Dr. Jean Laffont, the physician of Kaskaskia, and others, Father Gibault carried a proclamation from Clark to the village on the Wabash. Just how his talks influenced the French is not clear. He apparently explained to them the new alliance between the French and the revolting colonies, and told them that they

⁸⁵ Gibault to Bishop of Quebec, Oct., 1769, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, XVI, pp. 608-25.

⁸⁶ Gibault to Bishop Quebec, Oct., 1769, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, XVI, pp. 608-25.

⁸⁷ WHSC, XVIII, p. 493, n. 25.

⁸⁸ Jean Francois Hubert, later Bishop of Quebec.

were not bound further by their oath of allegiance to the British rule. They then listened to Dr. Laffont and, under his direction, accepted American rule and raised the American flag over the fort. Despite the recapture of the post by the British forces under Lieutenant-Governor Henry Hamilton, the French of Vincennes remained friendly to the American cause and aided Clark a few months later in his capture of the village. Gibault, writing to the Bishop of Quebec, denied that he was responsible for the change of allegiance of the people of Vincennes, but this statement can be explained by his later dissatisfaction with his treatment by the American government, and the fact that he did not step out of his position as spiritual adviser to the French, leaving the actual inducement to change allegiance to his secular companions. Nevertheless the letters of Hamilton and of other contemporaries agree that without Gibault, Vincennes might not have been taken by Clark, and the cooperation of the French inhabitants might not have been obtained.⁸⁹

The benefits which Gibault and the other citizens of Vincennes thought they would receive from their new commanders failed to materialize. Instead, they lost not only the existing government and order, but had to bear pillage and, at the same time, support the invading troops. In 1783⁹⁰ Father Bernard, a Capuchin, took charge of St. Louis and Cahokia. Thus Father Gibault, who had resided at St. Genevieve, was free to return to his neglected Vincennes. His first entry on this occasion on the baptismal register is from June 1, 1785. Gibault, said Colonel Vigo,⁹¹ "was a true pastor wholly devoted to his people

89 Kaskaskia Records, IHC, Vol. V, pp. xxv-xxxii, contains best discussion of Gibault's part in the capture. Hamilton to Haldimand, Sept. 22, 1778, MPHC, IX, p. 480; Hamilton's Report of his Expedition, MPHC, IX, p. 497; *History of Knox and Daviess Counties*, pp. 39-43; Guilday, *Life and Times of John Carroll*, pp. 87-89; Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Capture of Vincennes, The Original Narratives of George Rogers Clark and of his Opponent, Gov. Henry Hamilton*, Indianapolis (1927), pp. 72-75, 188; John Gilmary Shea, *Life of Archbishop Carroll*, pp. 187-9.

90 Bishop of Quebec to Bruté, Feb. 23, 1839, copy in Hailandiere Notes, UNDA.

91 Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1935), p. 184.

and his duty as a priest." But his task was difficult; his report to the Bishop of Quebec, his superior, shows that the fervor of the Catholics of Vincennes had cooled under the neglect of twenty-six years since the departure of the Jesuits. His letter of June 6, 1786, answering complaints that had been made against him by the parishioners shows that they were in ignorance of the doctrines of the Church and of the ceremonies. Furthermore, some were trading brandy to the savages, which Gibault thought a great evil, considering the disastrous effect the liquor had on the simple savages.

The old church was in decay; the people treated him coolly until he announced to them that he had pressing invitations from Cahokia. Despite their lack of fervor, they did not want to lose his ministrations entirely, so they busied themselves with plans for a new church, ninety feet long and forty-two feet wide upon a foundation of stone. The pillars were only seventeen feet in height, because the fierce winds would not permit a higher building. The old church was to be made into a presbytery. The lack of government, and the lack of religious guidance had taken its toll. The people had slipped into a semi-barbarous condition. "Everybody is in poverty, which engenders theft and rapine. Wantonness and drunkenness pass here as elegance and amusements quite in style. . . . No commandant, no troops, no prison, no hangman, always as in small places a crowd of relatives or allies who sustain each other: in a word absolute impunity for these and ill-luck for the stranger."⁹² But the missionary labored hard. He held instruction classes twice a day and within two months had a congregation that could follow the prayers of the mass, and children who could recite the greater and lesser catechism. This time Gibault remained four years, his last entry being on October 11, 1789. From Vincennes he went to the Illinois missions, and thence across the Mississippi to New Madrid where he died in 1804.

⁹² Gibault to Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786, AAQ, tr. in *IllHC*, V, pp. 534-44.

Just why Gibault made his final decision to leave Vincennes is not clear. We know from his letters that malicious tongues made unpleasant his attempts to restore the former religious fervor in Vincennes. When the West was turned over to Bishop Carroll's jurisdiction, he wanted to return to Quebec,⁹³ but his actions in the surrender of Vincennes had made him *persona non grata* in Canada and prevented a full recommendation from Bishop Hubert to Bishop Carroll to take him into the new Baltimore diocese. The remnants of correspondence between Carroll and Gibault in 1789,⁹⁴ do not indicate any misunderstanding between them such as later arose over the attempts of Gibault to get the Cahokia church property from the government. Hamtramck seems to give a reasonable explanation for his leaving Vincennes when he says that Gibault was leaving for "more money."⁹⁵ Judging from the subsequent history of the missionaries at Vincennes, the impoverished Frenchmen had little to give and felt little obligated to provide for the sustenance of their missionary. Father Gibault likewise failed to receive recompense for the sacrifices he had made in cooperation with Clark's forces in the Revolution. He was impoverished and was receiving no salary from his parishioners. He thought he saw a better chance at Cahokia, and, failing there, he passed on across the Mississippi.

Gibault stands at the closing of the first period of Vincennes history. His work was not appreciated in his day either by the Church or by the state. Without his labors, one fears to think to what depths the moral condition of Vincennes would have dropped from 1763, the time of the Jesuits, to 1792, the coming of Flaget. Gibault built a church and a home for the missionaries. He renewed in the French some knowledge of their faith. He instructed the children; he made an effort at least to keep

⁹³ Gibault to Bishop of Quebec, May 22, 1788, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, p. 583; Hubert to Carroll, Oct. 6, 1788, copy in AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, pp. 589-90.

⁹⁴ Carroll to Gibault, Jan. 20, 1790, IIIHC, V, pp. 590-1.

⁹⁵ Hamtramck to Harmar, Nov. 2, 1789, Harmar Papers XI, WLCL.

the poor neglected frontiersmen from the savagery that threatened to engulf them. When he left, they were still in a rather sorry state. Physically, morally and sacramentally they were in need, and they turned with anxious plea to the American government for material aid, and to Baltimore, the home of the first Catholic bishop of the United States, for spiritual consolation.

The retirement of Gibault from Vincennes in 1789 marks the closing of the Canadian epoch of the old French mission. So far as the future was concerned, Baltimore and the American bishops were its hope. The population of the village had already begun the transition from a French fort to an American outpost. On the baptismal register during Gibault's last residence are to be found American names. As if to make the change more emphatic, the Holy See in 1789 had placed the new bishop at Baltimore, John Carroll, in charge of the territories of the northwest under the jurisdiction of the American government. Later decrees of January 28, 1791,⁹⁶ and November 28, 1792⁹⁷ merely did away with any doubts of the two American bishops about their jurisdiction.

Bishop Carroll does not seem to have been informed immediately of Gibault's departure. On June 5, 1792⁹⁸ he acknowledged Gibault's letter containing his reasons for going, and thanked him for his efforts to secure the church property in the village. At the same time, he announced that M. Flaget was to be the new missionary at Vincennes.

During the absence of priests from Vincennes Antoine Gamelin, and then Pierre Mallet,⁹⁹ performed the task formerly undertaken by Phillibert. There were at that time three other priests in the Illinois country, Fathers Huet de la Valiniere,¹⁰⁰ F.

96 Antonelli to Hubert, Nov. 28, 1791, AAQ.

97 Antonelli to Hubert, Nov. 28, 1792, AAQ.

98 Carroll to Gibault, June 5, 1792, copy in AAB.

99 Vincennes Baptismal Register, VPR.

100 Huet de la Valiniere to Antonio de Sedella, April 20, 1788, UNDA; Carroll to Bishop of Quebec, May 5, 1788, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, pp. 581-2; Hubert to Carroll, Oct. 6, 1788, AAQ, tr. in IIIHC, V, p. 589.

Le Dru,¹⁰¹ and Paul St. Pierre,¹⁰² but if they performed any functions at Vincennes they did not place their names in the parish register. That LaValiniere, at least, was at Vincennes for a while during Gibault's residence a letter of his to the ecclesiastical authorities testifies, but apparently he did not return after Gibault's departure. None of these three seems to have been of the quality of Gibault, each having left his former location because of difficulties with his superior. Bishop Bruté notes that Colonel Francis Vigo told him that he went to Philadelphia¹⁰³ to see Bishop Carroll to ask for missionaries other than these three. Bishop Carroll promised Vigo to send in their places the Sulpician Fathers, Levadoux, Richard and Flaget. That Vigo, then apparently active in the church organization, represented the trustees in his plea we can have no doubt. Cold as seemed the faith of these habitants on the Wabash, there were yet some embers from which a fervent religious priest such as Flaget could arouse a flame of faith.

During the time this gloom was settling about Vincennes, there is evidence that Catholicism was alive in the vicinity of what is now Fort Wayne. The journal¹⁰⁴ of Henry Hay, describing a trip to Fort Wayne in 1789, records a Christmas mass attended in the home of Mr. Barthelemes in that settlement. The inhabitants were summoned by three boys ringing cow bells. At the mass, said, apparently, by Father Louis Payet,¹⁰⁵ Hay played the flute and his companion Kinzie played the fiddle. How Payet was at Fort Miami at that time cannot be explained from existing evidence, nor do we know whether the services of the Church were held for any length of time in

101 Le Dru to Bishop of Quebec, March 29, 1790, AAQ.

102 *Relacion de los servicios meritos y conducta de los Ecclesiasticos*, 14 Febrero 1794 — Archives of Indies, Legajo 2686, Photostat in Library of Congress.

103 List of the Priests who signed the Registers at Vincennes, Bruté Notes, UNDA.

104 IHSP, VII, pp. 310, 315.

105 Cyprien Tanguay, *Répertoire Général du Clergé Canadien*, Quebec, 1893, p. 140.

this northern settlement. This is the only written record we have. Of Ouiatenon during this period we have not even this. When the Indian wars began, there is doubt whether white people remained in these outposts. Later, as the wars subsided in the upper Wabash, French and half-breeds of Catholic faith were found scattered throughout the region. St. Joseph's mission apparently was extinct, but Joseph Bertrand was founding the settlement of Bertrand.¹⁰⁶

106 St. Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 181; Burnet Journals in Northern Indiana Historical Society Museum, South Bend.

CHAPTER II

CARROLL TAKES UP THE RULE OF THE WEST

BISHOP JOHN CARROLL OF BALTIMORE found entrusted to his care a huge territory with a scattered Catholic population. Had the communicants been gathered together in one locality, it is doubtful whether he would have had sufficient priests to care for them. Outside of the old missions in Maryland and Pennsylvania, the dispersion of Catholics over the whole eastern seaboard rendered proper attention impossible. The settlements in the Northwest and Kentucky, much as Carroll wished to care for them, must do without religious services. He accepted for the time, the services of La Valiniere, St. Pierre and Le Dru, but the complaints ¹ of the people, and the quarrels among these three, soon convinced him that other help must be secured. At this time, what was a tragedy for the Catholic Church in Europe became a blessing for the scattered missions of America. Amidst the turmoil of the French Revolution, many French priests, finding no opportunity for service in their own country, turned to other mission fields of the Church. This was particularly true of the Society of Saint Sulpice. The French Revolution, by driving them at least temporarily from France, gave the Church in the United States the Sulpician missionaries with their seminaries, probably the greatest single influence in the training of the priesthood in the United States, and the salvation of the Catholic missions of the Middle West. Altogether, between the years 1791 and 1800, twenty-seven ² French priests, including the Sulpicians, came to the United States, nearly doubling the number of the American clergy.

At least six of these twenty-seven were to contribute towards the care of the mission of Vincennes. Benedict Joseph Flaget, Stephen Theodore Badin, Gabriel Richard, Donatien Olivier

¹ List of priests who signed the register at Vincennes, Bruté Notes, UNDA.

² M. C. Moreau, *Les pretres Émigrés aux États Unis*, Paris, 1858, pp. 85-7.

and Jean Francois Rivet inscribed their names on the baptismal registers of Vincennes. William Dubourg, later as Bishop of Louisiana, was to send help in the persons of Fathers Blanc and Jeanjean, while John David had the missions under his care during his services as Bishop at Bardstown, and trained other missionaries for Vincennes in his seminary. Although the Superior of the Sulpicians had intended primarily to establish a seminary, to be known as St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, the opportunities for such an institution were slight, while the need of priests in the western missions was great. Bishop Carroll had been importuned by Colonel Vigo³ and other citizens of Vincennes to send a resident missionary. After consultation with the Sulpician superiors Bishop Carroll sent Father Flaget.⁴ His confreres Fathers Gabriel Richard and Michael Levadoux were assigned to the other missions of the Illinois country.

The Sulpicians,⁵ whose arrival was so timely, are not a religious order in the strict sense of the term. The organization as founded by Father Jean Olier in Paris is a body of secular priests, each of whom has been called and ordained under title of service for his diocese. The permission of his bishop must be obtained before he can be accepted into St. Sulpice. Although seminarians may be accepted as aspirants or candidates with the permission of their bishops, there is no proper reception into the Society until after ordination to the priesthood. Usually, too, the one-year novitiate called Solitude must be completed. The members of the Society take no vows, but obedience to all Superiors is required as long as one remains in the Society.

³ List of priests who signed the register at Vincennes, Bruté Notes, UNDA; Dorothy Riker, "Francis Vigo", IMH, XXV (1930), pp. 12-25.

⁴ Carroll to Members of Parish of Vincennes, June 5, 1792, copy in Georgetown University Archives; M. J. Spaulding, *Flaget*, p. 32.

⁵ Joseph W. Ruane, *The Beginnings of the Society of St. Sulpice in the United States (1791-1829)*, Baltimore, 1935, p. 3; M. Philipin De Rivieres, *Vies de quelques membres de la Campagne de Saint-Sulpice qui ont été envoyés dans les missions des États Unis à l'époque de la Révolution Française*, Mss. in StMSA.

The spirit of poverty is practiced, also without vows, and enjoined by the constitution. When a subject feels that he can no longer observe the spirit and restrictions of the Society, he is free, and is even expected to resign. Such was the organization that came to America so providentially at the time of the French Revolution. While their principal work has always been the training of priests, their services as missionaries in the Middle West have ranked them as one of the great missionary groups in American history, and Flaget stands high in this service.

It was with evident pleasure that Bishop Carroll wrote on June 5, 1792,⁶ to the parish at Vincennes to announce the near arrival of Father Flaget. "M. Flaget will be yours and with his zeal, his piety and his manners full of sweetness and charity I am assured that he will win all hearts to Christ and that he will confirm in you all the principles of our holy religion." Flaget had remained in Baltimore only two months. He took a flatboat from Pittsburgh, and, at Louisville, he joined his confreres Michael Levadoux and Gabriel Richard, who were on their way to Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher. He arrived at Vincennes a few days before Christmas 1792.⁷ On December 23,⁸ he made his first entry, the baptism of Marie Boyer, on the registers of the parish.

Bishop Carroll's promise that the people of Vincennes would like their new pastor was amply fulfilled. Forty years later, when Bishop Bruté⁹ was making his first episcopal visitation, the older inhabitants of the diocese still talked of this beloved priest and his kindness and generosity. He was a young man of above average height,¹⁰ of dark complexion, whose kind smile

6 Carroll to Gibault, June 5, 1792, copy in Georgetown University Archives; Shea, *Life and Times of Carroll*, p. 484.

7 Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 33. Spalding who had access to Flaget's Journals and papers which have since been destroyed will be the source of this chapter unless some other reference is given.

8 Baptismal register, VPR.

9 Bruté to Mother Rose, Jan. 16, 1835, Mt. St. Joseph's Archives, Emmitsburg; Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 61.

10 (Henry Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 117-8.

and gentle speech and movement appealed directly to these forlorn people. He was a man of education, but his simplicity and patience enabled him to enter sympathetically into the trials and hardships of this pioneer settlement. He was a native of Billom, Auvergne, France,¹¹ and was just now entering his thirtieth year. He had been raised in the house of his uncle, the Canon Benoit Flaget of Billom, and after completing his theology at the seminary of Clermont he had joined the Society of Saint Sulpice and was ordained priest in 1787. He had taught theology at the seminary of Nantes for two years, until the Revolution closed the seminary. On the advice of his superior he had decided to enter the American missions. Spalding, in his life of Flaget, intimates that he had Vincennes in mind on coming to America. If this is so, he could hardly have expected to find the mission in such a desolate condition.

The old log church which had been erected by Father Gibault in 1785 had not been well cared for. It is true that prayers were said in it each Sunday, led by Antoine Gamelin or Pierre Mallet, but the altar had been badly put together in the first place and was now almost tottering. Flaget set to work to make the church and altar¹² presentable for the Christmas feasts. At the same time he sought to reanimate the faith of the people. But the years of neglect had had their effect. To his distress only twelve of the seven hundred¹³ Catholics of the village could be induced to approach the sacraments for the feast. He saw that the work of rebuilding the faith of these neglected people must begin with the very foundation. He must first get them to come to the church before he could instruct them. He opened a school for the children. Besides the rudiments of learning, he taught them the lessons of the catechism and the prayers of the Church. Nor were the arts neglected. He formed singing classes and taught the best voices to sing French

11 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI, p. 93, Article, Flaget.

12 Spalding, *Flaget*, pp. 33-4.

13 *Idem*; (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 112.

canticles. He selected and trained some of the boys to serve mass. The children, so long neglected, flocked to their teacher and pastor. They sang the songs everywhere and readily participated in his services in the old church. With the children so completely won over, he soon had the parents following their children to the church. They had not lost the faith, but had merely grown indifferent. Soon they came to confession in great numbers.

Flaget was not content merely to take care of their souls. He realized that these erring children had fallen into ways of indolence and improvidence because of the neglect of the government and the ravages of war. With nothing else to rely upon, they were turning to the ways that they had learned during their close association with the savages, who alone knew how to live without the aids of civilization. He sought to turn them from the chase, no longer profitable, to farming and to the trades. He had looms¹⁴ made and purchased a house with adjoining lands that he might teach there the different trades to the youth of the village. To some Americans he gave lessons¹⁵ in French, probably, for his support.

Flaget was more than priest. He acted as father, judge and counsellor. To him came the people for arbitration of their disputes, for the settlement of the estates¹⁶ of the deceased, and for advice in distress. With them he shared what money he had brought, and even his linen. He had been in Vincennes scarcely a month when the dreaded smallpox broke out and raged throughout the settlement until towards the end of March. He endeared himself forever to his parishioners by the way in which, without thought of himself, he cared for the sick. That year there were 76 deaths¹⁷ in the village, besides much sickness

14 Spalding, Flaget, p. 35; (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, *loc. cit.*

15 Flaget to Samuel Baird, July 30 (1793), Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

16 *Idem*; (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, *loc. cit.*

17 Audran notes on the Vincennes baptismal register, UNDA; Moreau, C. M., *op. cit.*, p. 170.

independent of small pox. In October the good pastor himself was taken ill,¹⁸ but his strong constitution successfully withstood this attack of virulent fever. He had other attacks of fever, the great affliction of the missionaries who worked in the river settlements. During one illness he wrote to a friend that his only affliction was his inability to be of service. The old residents, years afterwards, were eloquent in praising the services rendered by Flaget to poor and abandoned families during this plague of smallpox and other diseases. One of the most striking tales of his zeal relates to his discovery of a group of slaves afflicted¹⁹ with the disease. In a building devoted to them he found fourteen stretched out on the straw; the greater number were either dead or dying. The odors were nearly suffocating, yet without hesitation Flaget rushed to the side of the dying, urging repentance for their sins and giving them absolution. Then, having obtained by force of prayer and promises the assistance of two other slaves, he carried those who were still living to another shelter and rendered them all possible care. That night he dug a ditch and gave burial to those who were dead.

For the Indians of the vicinity Flaget had great pity. They had retained little, if any, of the teachings of Christianity. They were frequently helpless victims of the dreaded smallpox. What was perhaps just as fatal in the long run was their addiction to strong liquor. Looking upon their sad state, he could understand why the earlier Jesuit missionaries wanted to keep from them the avaricious traders with their brandy. They were but children and deserved the protection proper to children. They needed a missionary, and he wrote to Bishop Carroll offering himself, if Carroll could send another priest to take his place in the village.²⁰

18 Flaget to Samuel Baird, July 30 (1793), Lasselle Papers, ISLC; Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 36.

19 Henri Greliche, *Un Essai sur la vie et les travaux de Mgr. Flaget par son secrétaire*, Clermont, 1851, pp. 40-1.

20 Spalding, *Flaget*, loc. cit.

Flaget had been a professor in the Seminary at Nantes and apparently had brought with him as many of his books as the difficult trip would permit. His spare time he spent among these books, keeping up in his studies. His Superiors did not care to lose this student and teacher. Just when his labors seemed to be producing much fruit, he was summoned to return to Baltimore, and sent to Havana to establish there a new college. Flaget lacked the heart to break the news to his flock, and, on the pretext of making a visit to Kaskaskia, he left Vincennes late in April, 1795,²¹ finally going by way of New Orleans to Baltimore. The parishoners were dismayed when they learned that he had gone, and three times they begged Bishop Carroll to return him to them. Bishop Carroll answered their requests by promising another man and sending to them a remarkable missionary, Father John Francis Rivet.

Flaget's interest in the welfare of the Indians of the Wabash is significant at a time when the Indians themselves were becoming so troublesome. To the Americans, who sought their lands for permanent settlement, the Indians were unfriendly. To the French, who had sought only their trade and had given them missionaries, the Indians had always been friendly. It has been maintained that ²² the murder of a white man by an Indian at Vincennes had been unknown until after the American revolution. The Piankeshaws of the neighborhood had readily conceded to the Vincennes French a large section ²³ of the land along the Wabash, and in turn St. Ange, the French commander, had granted to them 150 acres as a village which they maintained until 1786. The Weas were centered in the old post of Ouiatenon; the Miami were mostly north and east on the upper Wabash; the Delawares were east of Vincennes. The Potawa-

21 Spalding, *Flaget*, pp. 43-4; (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 113.

22 Audran notes on the Vincennes baptismal register, UNDA; Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 43.

23 Petition of the Inhabitants of Post Vincennes, July 26, 1787, TPUS, II, pp. 589-90; Memorial by Barthelemi Tariveau, Feb. 28, 1788, IIIHC, V, pp. 462-3.

tomi were in the north, on the upper Tippecanoe and on the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan. Of these tribes, only some of the Potawatomi retained the Christianity they had received from the early Jesuits, but all of these tribes remembered the friendly relations that had existed between the French and the Indians before the arrival of the Americans. As the French found it necessary to take sides with the Americans against the Indians, the Indians no longer granted them immunity. At first, they merely warned them that, if they continued to associate with the Americans, they would not be spared. Hamtramck, writing to Harmar on April 11, 1789,²⁴ announced that the "Weya Indians steal cattle from Vincennes for the first time" and on the 26th of May²⁵ that the "discrimination of French and English is done with. The negroes are the only ones that have a chance for their lives." On August 14th²⁶ he wrote that the Kentuckians were making an attack on the Wabash Indians and that he expected a return attack. In this way intermittent warfare spread over the whole western frontier. Luckily for Vincennes, the bitterest and most important fighting was along the Miami and Maumee rivers, but the Wabash was not to escape entirely.

Major Hamtramck, knowing that trouble was brewing, sent Antoine Gamelin to the Indians, inviting them to a peace meeting. Leaving Vincennes April 5, 1790,²⁷ Gamelin visited in turn the Kikapouguoi, the Piankeshaws on Vermillion River, a tribe of the Kickapoos, the Ouiatenons, the Eel River Indians, the Miamis, and the Shawnees and Delawares who had assembled with the Miami at Miami Town. Everywhere Gamelin received evasive answers, and Governor St. Clair and Hamtramck saw that a peaceful settlement was not likely.

The raids of the Indians upon the white settlements continued, and in the eyes of the Kentuckians the Indians became

24 Hamtramck to Harmar, April 11, 1789, Harmar Papers, X, WLCL.

25 Hamtramck to Wylls, May 26, 1789, Harmar Papers, X, WLCL.

26 Hamtramck to Harmar, Aug. 14, 1789, Harmar Papers, XI, WLCL.

27 A. S. P., *Indian Affairs*, I, pp. 92-4.

worthy of only one thing, destruction. In October 1790, Colonel Hardin ²⁸ with six hundred troops visited the abandoned Miami Town at the junction of the St. Joseph and St. Mary Rivers, and destroyed the village and fields of corn. The next year two new expeditions were fitted out against the Wabash Indians. The first, under Brigadier General Charles Scott ²⁹ and Colonel James Wilkinson, left Kentucky May 25th and marched directly to Ouiatenon and destroyed the village, capturing a few Indians. The second expedition of five hundred men under Brigadier General Wilkinson left Fort Washington July 20, and destroyed the village Ke-na-pa-com-a-quá on the Eel River with other neighboring villages and several hundred acres of corn. Soon the Weas ³⁰ came to Vincennes begging for peace, and the next year Major Hamtramck and the Wabash Indians made a treaty of peace. Hamtramck made the lower Wabash Indians promise not to take part in hostilities in case the Miami should attack and, further, to give notice to the garrison at Fort Knox if they heard that any other tribe planned to make an attack. Hamtramck ³¹ was not too sure that the Indians would keep their promises. He feared the havoc wrought amongst them by the indiscriminate sale of brandy.

While the warring tribes were a serious impediment to any missionary work among the Indians of the Wabash, their sad state was caused far more by liquor than by the incursions of the frontier militia. Hamtramck complained that "a number of villains in this village . . . keep the Indians continually drunk."³² He saw in this drinking a cause of war, because, when spring found the Indians destitute, with their peltries traded for brandy, they would go to war for plunder. In the eyes of the missionaries, giving drink to these primitive people of the forest

²⁸ Smith, *St. Clair*, I, p. 169.

²⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, I, p. 191; Journal of Scott's expedition. Typed copy in Clark Papers, MHSC.

³⁰ A.S.P., *Indian Affairs*, I, p. 131.

³¹ Hamtramck to Harmar, June 15, 1791, Harmar Papers, XIV, WLCL.

³² Hamtramck to the Secretary of War, Mar. 31, 1792, TPUS, II, p. 381.

had all the evils of giving it to children. The result was insensate drunkenness,³³ loss of property and, generally, debaucheries and murders. War that kept the savage from the traders was a blessing, if it also kept him away from the traders' whiskey.³⁴ When peace brought the Indians to Vincennes, that settlement witnessed the ultimate in the degradation of the Indian by liquor.

While the French were losing the friendship of the Indians they were establishing their first contacts with the American government which had formally arrived with Harmar's troops. Their initial experiences were not encouraging. The Kentucky militia, the company of Captain Valentine Dalton³⁵ and of other self-appointed avengers of Indian attacks, lived off the inhabitants and did not pay for the provisions they consumed. They raided the stores and captured boats of provisions arriving at Vincennes from New Orleans, under the pretext of destroying Spanish merchandise. As Bazadone³⁶ seems to have been the only Spanish merchant of the time in Vincennes, it is apparent that they were using the traditional hostility to the Spanish as an excuse for further plunder. Petitions from Vincennes and the Illinois settlements began to pour into Congress, until that body had to take some action. On June 19th, 1787,³⁷ Colonel Josiah Harmar addressed a letter to Colonel Legras and Major Bosseron, the recognized authorities in the settlement since the government of Todd, announcing that he had been ordered by Congress to march his troops to Vincennes for their protection. He asked them to assure the inhabitants

33 Hamtramck to the Secretary of War, Mar. 31, 1792, TPUS, II, p. 381.

34 Gabriel Richard to Bishop Carroll, Nov. 6, 1790, and May 19, 1800, AAB.

35 Harmar to the Secretary of War, May 14, 1787, Smith, *St. Clair*, II, pp. 20-21; Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana, a redemption from Slavery*, p. 165.

36 Lee Burns, "Life in Old Vincennes," IHSP, VIII (1929), p. 441. Thoulon and Troussoron, two others, were Spanish subjects, since they came from New Orleans, Proceedings of Military Court, Oct. 18, 1786, Draper Mss. 53J53, WSHS; John Rice Jones to Arthur St. Clair, May 11, 1790. St. Clair Papers, OSLC; Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Spanish American Frontier*, Boston, 1927, pp. 81-97.

37 Harmar Papers, Letter Book B. Letter lxxx, pp. 103-4, WLCL.

that this expedition would be different from what they had recently endured.

Writing to Harmar from Vincennes, Bartholomew Tardiveau, the French merchant from St. Louis, who had interested himself in the condition of his countrymen of Illinois, insisted that Harmar establish a strong garrison at Vincennes because the habitants, being used to "despotic" government, were not "ripe for a free government."³⁸ Thus began American control.

Harmar placed a Catholic, Major John Francis Hamtramck,³⁹ who, though Canadian born, had joined the American forces and served during the war, in command of the military garrisons of Fort Knox and of Vincennes. Hamtramck undertook to remedy the lawlessness which had gone unchecked in Vincennes for many years. Governor Todd had previously placed Colonel Legras and Major Bosseron as military commanders of the village, and of the Vincennes militia. As the court erected by Todd apparently did not function, during the period of neglect these two had exercised the only government in Vincennes, and Hamtramck found it "in great confusion." Finally, in April, he dissolved the existing court and set up a judiciary of five magistrates — one magistrate to sit on matters not exceeding 50 livres in peltries, two for cases not exceeding 100 livres in peltries—with an appeal allowed to a district court of three magistrates.⁴⁰ But this arrangement did not satisfy the population. John C. Symmes noted in 1790 that the French found the American laws too complex. "The command or order of the military commandant is better law and speedier justice for them and what they prefer to all the legal systems found in Littleton and Blackstone. It is a language which they say they can understand. It is cheap and expeditious and they wish for no other."⁴¹

38 B. Tardiveau to Harmar, Aug. 6, 1787, Harmar Papers, I, WLCL.

39 George B. Catlin, "Colonel John Francis Hamtramck," IMH, XXVI (1930), pp. 237-53; Lavadoux to Carroll, Sept. 10, 1796, V, 5, AAB, tr. in RACHS, XX, p. 261.

40 Hamtramck to Harmar, April 5, 1788, Harmar Papers, II, WLCL.

41 *Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*, ed. by Bond, p. 288.

Of course it must be remembered that free government was more a matter of words than of fact at that early date in the Northwest. Even the Northwest Ordinance did not allow the new regions self-government until a certain number had been reached in population, and, in the meantime, the territorial governor was only slightly limited. One of the chief reasons for this impatience of the French with the new government was that they saw themselves divested of their lands, something which they thought would not have happened under French rule. One of the first things Congress had to do when formal American government was established was to ratify to the French land claimants their rights to what were called the Donation Lands. The fact that subsequently many were wheedled out of their lands gave them even less reason to like American government. They gradually became used to the intricacies of American law, but at the cost of most of their property.

This gradual impoverishment of the inhabitants of Vincennes was attributed by most of the thriftier Americans to French indolence. John C. Symmes, being better informed, recognized that the lack of government, the pillaging of the Kentucky militia and the losses incurred through support of the American Army, the destruction of the fur trade, the Indian wars, and the destruction of the game had all played their part. The ownership of land was a more complex problem. In the French settlements land had been granted by the military commandant. Some of these grants were registered, some were not. Further confusion was introduced by the destruction of the existing land records by one of the clerks. The American government promised to respect the rights of these French settlers regardless of the government under which they had secured their titles. The settlement of these claims was finally taken up by the federal Congress. The citizens themselves, through Bartholomew Tardiveau, their agent, had petitioned the Congress of the Confederation to grant to every male inhabitant 500 acres of land.

This petition of July 26, 1787⁴² attributed their previous neglect of proper land titles to their interest in the fur trade, which had made them content merely to raise food sufficient for their current needs. Now, with their fur trade in decline, they felt forced to turn to agriculture. They added further that they had suffered other losses, by reason of their fidelity to the American government, from the hostility of the Indians and the rapacity of the incoming American troops. In their turn, American inhabitants of Vincennes, alarmed by the first proposal made in Congress that all who had come into the settlement after 1783 be expelled, joined their petition to that of the French, asking that they too should receive 500 acres of land, and insisting that they had not taken part in the pillage committed by the passing military forces.

Finally, after many petitions, the federal Congress passed an act March 3, 1791, granting to the French and Canadian inhabitants, and other settlers at "Post St. Vincent" on or before the year 1783, four hundred acres of land for each head of a family. The surveys of the lands were to be made at the expense of the petitioners. Other provisions of this act allowed those who had improved the 150 acres formerly belonging to the Piankeshaw Indians to retain them. Those who had actually improved and cultivated a grant from any court or commandant claiming authority to make such a grant were to be confirmed in their ownership by the governor to the extent of 400 acres. The tract of land consisting of 5400 acres which had been fenced in and used as a commons was to be reserved for that use until otherwise disposed of by law. In addition to these grants, inhabitants who did not benefit by the other donations and who were members of the militia at Vincennes on August 1, 1790, and had done militia duty were granted one hundred acres, to be laid out at the expense of the grantees as the governor should direct.⁴³

⁴² Petition to Congress from Post Vincennes, Aug. 7, 1787, TPUS, II, pp. 66-7.

⁴³ Land Grant to the Inhabitants of Vincennes and the Illinois Country, TPUS, II, pp. 339-42.

These grants might have established the French in some kind of economic independence. But it was to be years before the land was surveyed, and even then the confusion, resulting from the refusal of the inhabitants to move and redistrict the settlement, prevented an orderly and systematic survey. Furthermore, the inhabitants did not retain their titles.

The commandant, Major Hamtramck, found himself forced by a petition of the French, made on May 10, 1789,⁴⁴ to prohibit newcomers from settling and cutting up the commons of the village. And on March 24, 1790,⁴⁵ he issued an Ordinance that indicates more clearly the unhappy state of the people. "Many people having sold their goods and lands, to the prejudice of their creditors, the inhabitants and others of the district of Post Vincennes, are expressly prohibited, henceforth, from selling, or exchanging, or mortgaging any part of their goods, lands, or slaves, under any pretext, without express permission from the officer commanding at this place. This ordinance to remain in force until the arrival of his excellency the governor." Some of the inhabitants in despair left Vincennes and tried their fortunes across the Mississippi, where the Spanish government was offering lands free of charge. Very few of those who remained had much to show for their sixty years or more of residence on the banks of the Wabash. When flood, and then drought destroyed the crops, Hamtramck and St. Clair found it necessary to rush food to keep them from starving. Father Flaget sought a solution of these difficulties in attempting to teach them the elements of agriculture and the domestic and commercial arts. But the French as a group were never again to see their former prosperity. One can readily understand how the wisdom and sympathy of Flaget won their hearts, how they feared losing him, and how anxiously they awaited his return.

⁴⁴ John B. Dillon, *A History of Indiana to 1816*, Indianapolis, 1859, p. 406.

⁴⁵ *Idem*.

CHAPTER III

JEAN FRANCOIS RIVET — LE PAUVRE MISSIONNAIRE

FLAGET's successor does not seem to have been prepared for the condition of his new mission. Possibly, if Bishop Carroll had understood the sad plight of the distant station, he would have insisted that Flaget remain. It is not even certain that Rivet was sent to care for Vincennes. He and Father Peter Janin, who accompanied him as far as Vincennes, held commissions from the United States government as missionaries to the Indians, the care of the whites to be merely incidental to their labors. The government, alarmed by the growing hostility of the Indians, had seen the necessity of mission work, if the savages were to be friends of the American people.

Under the Confederation the chief concern of the government had been Indian trade and the ownership of land. No provision had been made for missionaries. The new national government changed this policy. President Washington recommended to Congress the need of civilizing the Indians.¹ Likewise the Secretary of War, Henry Knox, in his Report on Indian affairs to the President on July 7, 1789, made the following recommendations:

Missionaries of excellent moral character, should be appointed to reside in their nation, who should be well supplied with all the implements of husbandry, and the necessary stock for a farm.

These men should be made the instruments to work on the Indians; presents should commonly pass through their hands, or by their recommendations. They should, in no degree, be concerned in trade, or the purchase of lands, to rouse the jealousy of the Indians. They should be their friends and fathers.

¹ Walter H. Mohr, *Federal Indian Relations 1774-1788*, Philadelphia, 1933, pp. 197-9; Carroll to Dexter, Sept. 10, 1800, copy in F.6, AAB; *Writings of Washington*, ed. by Jared Sparks, 12 vols., Boston, 1834-7. Letter of Washington to Bishop Carroll, April 10, 1792, X, pp. 228-9. Speeches to both Houses of Congress, Oct. 25, 1791, XII, p. 20; Nov. 6, 1792, XII, p. 30.

Such a plan, although it might not fully effect the civilization of the Indians, would most probably be attended with the salutary effect of attaching them to the interest of the United States.²

Congress did not pass a law specifically providing for the support of missionaries, but the act of March 1, 1793,³ permitted the sending of agents to reside among the Indians and to work for their welfare. Bishop John Carroll⁴ offered the services of Fathers John Rivet and Peter Janin for the western Indians, and they received commissions on January 19, 1795,⁵ as missionaries to the Indians of the Wabash and Illinois countries. Each was to receive a salary of \$200 a year. Rivet was to reside among the Wabash Indians and Janin among those of Illinois. As these Indians had formerly been under the influence of the French and were inclined to respect Catholic missionaries, the choice of these two French émigrés for the task was well made. Of the two, Rivet was the better missionary and entered enthusiastically into the work of civilizing the Indians.

Father Jean Francois Rivet⁶ was born in 1757 in Grosmorne, in the island of Martinique, the son of Jean Baptiste and Marie Louise Lepoulart Rivet. While a youth, he went to Brive, France, the birthplace of his father, for his early schooling. He appears to have studied and to have taught for a while at the college of Sarlet, then entered the *Séminaire des ordinands* at Limoges in October, 1780. Aided by the generosity of an aunt living in Brive, Rivet was ordained May 25, 1781, and incardinated in the diocese of Limoges. On December 16, 1782, he was chosen professor of the *second class* at the Royal College

2 A.S.P., Indian Affairs, I, p. 54.

3 1 U. S. Stat. 1, p. 331.

4 Carroll to Dexter, Sept. 15, 1800, F. 7, AAB.

5 Receipts for pay for Peter Janin and John Francis Rivet signed by Michael Levadoux, as proxy for the missionaries, April 23, 1797, A.G.O. Old Records Division; A.S.P., Finance, I, pp. 537 and 540.

6 M. A. Chan. A. Lecler, *Martyrs et Confesseurs de la Foi du Diocèse de Limoges Pendant la Révolution Française*, 4 vols., Limoges, 1892-1904, vol. III, pp. 518-20.

of Limoges and on November 13, 1784, was promoted to the chair of professor of rhetoric which he occupied until the outbreak of the Revolution. The archives and the periodicals⁷ of the time make mention of his discourses before assemblies of notables in Limoges which received considerable praise. In 1791, in company with some friends, he fled to Madrid to escape the French Revolution. The new government of Spain, under pressure from France, was not so well disposed towards the refugees, and the companions separated, Father Rivet going to Cordova.⁸ Finally, all French subjects were ordered out of Spain. Rivet decided to enter the American missions. He arrived in Baltimore with Father William DuBourg, later bishop of Louisiana, on December 14, 1794, and was received by the Sulpicians at St. Mary's Seminary⁹ where he awaited the pleasure of Bishop Carroll, who made arrangements with the War Department for placing him in the Indian missions.

Father Leonard Neale, later Archbishop of Baltimore, acting for Carroll, obtained from the War Department orders for the transportation of Fathers Rivet and Janin and their baggage, with permission "in case of bad weather to ride in the wagon."¹⁰ On Tuesday, January 27, 1795,¹¹ Father Neale informed Mr. Samuel Hodgdon, commissary of the army, that Father Rivet's baggage had arrived the previous night and that the two men were ready to obey his call. Of the incidents of his journey we know nothing as Rivet's first letters to Carroll, as well as his letters to the officials of the War Departments have been lost.¹² His first entry in the baptismal register of

⁷ Notes collected by the late Very Rev. James Gregoire, VPR.

⁸ Camillus P. Maes, "The Rev. John Francis Rivet, Missionary Priest at Post Vincennes, 1795-1804," *Amer. Ecc. Rev.*, xxxv, pp. 33-4; Rivet to Garnier, *Mémoire à consulte*, 11B Gl, AAB; Romanet to Rivet, May 19, 1795, AAB, tr. in Maes *ut supra*; Moreau, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁹ Rev. John Tessier, *Customs of St. Mary's Seminary*, Mss. St. MSA.

¹⁰ S. N. Stagg to Samuel Heyden, Jan. 20, 1795, A.G.O., Old Records Division.

¹¹ Neale to Hodgdon, Jan. 27, 1796, A.G.O., Old Records Division.

¹² War Department Letters Received Book No. 78. Brief of letter to Secretary of War, Mar. 9, 1800; Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1795, 8BC4, AAB.

Vincennes was made on May 3, 1795, and he signs himself simply as J. F. Rivet, Missionary Priest.

Of the intellectual qualities and zeal of this missionary there is ample testimony, but no description of his physical appearance remains. Since he spent his childhood in Martinique, he may have been of dark complexion. His strenuous missionary labors bespeak a man of strong frame, but his early death, and the testimony of his fellow missionaries indicate a frail man afflicted with consumption. He wrote a clear hand, and usually signed himself simply as "Le Pauvre Missionnaire" in his letters to Bishop Carroll.

The long journey by boat from Pittsburgh, and by army transport to Vincennes, may have warned Rivet of the circumstances in which he would have to work. But neither he nor Janin were prepared for the problems that awaited them. They had been told by officials in Philadelphia that the Indians were a mild docile people, speaking a "kind of French." The natives whom Rivet met along the Wabash were the first of many shocks to these preconceived notions. The redmen he found were indeed mild and docile, disposed to listen until they came under the influence of the traders' whiskey. They simply could not resist the temptations of ardent spirits, and, when they drank, they usually drank to excess. In their drunkenness they became violent and licentious. The "kind of French," which he heard from the savage lips was an accent so barbarous that "one must have sucked it with his milk to understand."¹³ Rivet was at a loss as to how he could ever learn their language, since there were no dictionaries or books of any kind indicating the idioms. He and Janin had been led to believe that they would find the Indian generous, and that the means of livelihood would be abundant. Instead, he found that his flock was so poor that, when sickness or bad weather prevented them from hunting, they were in danger of starvation. They were accustomed to receive rather than to give.¹⁴ Instead of the healthful

¹³ Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

¹⁴ *Idem*.

climate which he had anticipated he found what he called "the most unhealthy climate in the whole world." The scarcity of common things was so great that he was forced to engage in work unworthy of his ministry to be able to "eat a piece of bread and drink the water of the Wabash." To add to his distress, his salary was delayed, and the French people with whom he lived had little money to spare for his services. All that they offered him during his first six months was about 40 livres, less than \$10 in American money. So desperate was his condition that, at times, he had to barter his linen for food, or to beg alms from the commandant of the fort.¹⁵

Rivet was inexperienced in missionary activities. Totally unequipped and hundreds of miles from any advisers, he was guided only by his zeal and what he had learned in France. Whatever plans he had made were based upon inaccurate information and had to be laid aside. He attempted first to investigate the condition of his savage charges. After consulting every available source of information, he drew up a memoir on the status of the Indians and sent it with recommendations to the Secretary of War. Unfortunately this memoir burned in the War Department fire in 1800, and while he offered to replace it, his offer was apparently not accepted. The only portion we have is from a letter he wrote to Bishop Carroll.¹⁶ Assuming that his appointment indicated that the government was sincerely desirous of civilizing and educating the Indians, he set forth a plan that would bring these unfortunate tribes to religion. Dealing, as he knew, with men not so sure as he of the value of religion, he proceeded to show the influence of religion on the Indians, how "even in cases of the most degraded drunkenness the mere sight of a priest clad in the garb which distinguished his profession, inspires them with a respect and even a tender affection which we cannot but wonder at."

¹⁵ Rivet to Carroll, April 5, 1797, ADC.

¹⁶ Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1795, 8BC4, AAB. Quoted by C. P. Maes, *Amer. Ecc. Rev.*, XXXV, pp. 37-40.

Consequently priests, as ministers of religion, should make the best instruments for civilizing the savage tribes.

The essence of his plan consisted in having the government agree upon a uniform and permanent plan of instruction and education. As he clearly observed, the work of one man could easily perish or become wasted by a successor who, with other ideas, would set aside what had already been done. If the government would adopt a uniform plan of education, he, on his part, would secure the necessary personnel from the exiled French clergy now living in Spain, England and other countries. He was confident that three or four of these French priests, once they learned the languages of the savages, could work wonders among them by instructing them according to a definite plan. Such a system had been successful under the Jesuits in early Canada, until the lack of governmental cooperation and the colonial wars had prevented the realization of the plan. Yet all knew the influence the French obtained over the Indians by these methods. To secure the aid of his fellow exiles seemed quite easy to Rivet, because he had received letters from them announcing their intention of following him.

This proposal is singular in American history, based as it was upon cooperation between the government and the Catholic Church. It went beyond the suggestions of Secretary Knox by making the priest the chief agent and religion the great civilizer. One cannot but wonder whether such a policy might not have prevented the rise of the Prophet and the wars of Tecumseh along the Wabash fifteen years later. But if the American government ever entertained the notion of sponsoring a long program of Catholic Indian missions under the care of the exiled French clergy, it gave Rivet no inkling of it. The encouragement he received was of the vaguest kind;¹⁷ and when Harrison came, there was a suggestion made of withdrawing even his small salary.¹⁸ Lacking further direction from the War Depart-

¹⁷ Rivet to Carroll, Aug. 6, 1796, 8BD3; Jan. 22, 1802, 8BF6, AAB.

¹⁸ Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 10, 1801, ADC; Moses Dawson, *Historical Narrative of Maj. Gen. William Henry Harrison*, Cincinnati, 1824, p. 12.

ment, and hampered by the failure of his salary to arrive, Father Rivet set about to do the best he could.

Naturally he was interested in those groups farther north, where the earlier Jesuit missionaries had labored before the expulsion of the order. There were some Christians among the Piankeshaws and Weas, and Eel River Miami, but these seem to have been converts of Gibault and Flaget. The earlier missionaries do not seem to have reached these Indians of the upper Wabash. The Potawatomi in the northern part of the state, however, had in former times received instruction from the Jesuits at the old St. Joseph Mission,¹⁹ located just beyond the present Indiana-Michigan boundary line on the St. Joseph River. These, too, had fallen into evil ways under the influence of the traders' whiskey. But when Rivet came to Vincennes, the more zealous tribesmen came to Vincennes to visit him, begging him to come to live with them.

Whether Rivet ever really visited the settlements of the Indians about the old St. Joseph Mission is not clear from his letters. On one occasion at least he speaks of a visit in the village of the Potawatomi,²⁰ but he does not give the location of the village. Possibly these were Potawatomi living nearer to Vincennes or a group of the tribe who had made a temporary camp near the village. He does, however, speak of plans for visiting St. Joseph; and in his early letters, thinking that Flaget would return, proposed to go to live at the St. Joseph mission.²¹

The Potawatomi of the St. Joseph River seem to have attracted the attention of all the missionaries of the neighborhood. Father Edmund Burke, when he was stationed at Detroit, proposed going to the St. Joseph mission for a visit, but decided that the evil conditions resulting from the rum trade would render his travel unsafe.²² He left Detroit, when the British

19 George Pare, "The St. Joseph Mission", *MVHR*, XVII, pp. 24-54.

20 Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

21 Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1795, 8BC4; Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

22 Burke to Bishop of Quebec, Oct. 5, 1795, N.E., III, 22, AAQ.

troops evacuated the forts of the Northwest, and was succeeded by Father Michael Levadoux, who passed through the villages of the St. Joseph Indians on his way to Detroit. Levadoux laid down certain conditions which these Potawatomi had to meet before they could have a missionary. But, observes Rivet, "all these instructions of Mr. Levadoux appear to have been buried in the bottom of the bottle."²³ Rivet wrote to them, and three chiefs came to confer with him at Vincennes. He set forth to them certain things they would have to do, asking them chiefly to make some provisions for "corn bread". To his astonishment, the chiefs, speaking through an interpreter, informed Rivet that they could promise nothing without a council of the tribes. Only a few of the Indians wanted him to come and these were powerless to bring about common action because of the anarchistic state into which the tribes had fallen as a result of their debaucheries in liquor. They promised to seek a council and obtain an answer for him. Despite their promises, Rivet received no answer to his proposal.

The missionary then tried another method. He wrote to William Burnet, an American trader living among the Potawatomi of the St. Joseph, proposing to take care of the education of Burnet's children, provided that he assisted him among the Indians and gave him hospitality. Apparently Rivet heard nothing from Burnet, whose half-breed children were being educated at Detroit, nor was he ever sure that the letter was delivered.

Following an urgent request, Rivet went one day among them—at what place he does not say—to care for a dying man, whom he baptized. The next day the man got worse and Rivet gave him the sacrament of extreme unction, and in the evening said the prayers for the dying. Rivet forbade the Indians to drink while the man was in his serious condition, and added a prohibition against any of the "diabolical operations" in use among them to discover the cause of the man's sickness or to cure him. They promised, but in the morning when Rivet was called, he

²³ Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5; Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1796, 8BD5, AAB.

found all changed. The whole band of Indians was drunk. He says: "There was the cry of song, a tone of voice that made me tremble." One of his interpreters, threatened with a knife, fled precipitately. One Indian threatened the lives of all whites in case the sick man died. Rivet was accused of having given the sick man "bad water and bad grease" in administering baptism and extreme unction. Sorrowfully Rivet realized that the sick man was being subjected to the magical practices of the drunken savages. He learned also that one of the chiefs really wanted him to die because he had been sick too long. The next day the sobered Indians apologized to Rivet only to lapse again the following night into their drunken orgies. The sick man died with the comforts of religion, but the missionary was disheartened by what he had seen.

Rivet was advised by his friends at Vincennes that he should not live with these Indians, because his life would not be safe during their drunken celebrations. He was now discouraged, not only because of his failure to win the Indians, but because the help that he had been promised from the government did not arrive. He was paying the interpreter from his own meager funds. The savages were unable to pay anything, and he found that he himself was forced to meet the funeral expenses of any whom he baptized before death. Often he gave even his own shirts to them for burial garments. The little money he had was insufficient, and Bishop Carroll advised him to avoid such expenses unless the government assisted him. Further, in his attempts to convert the savages from their constant drunkenness, Rivet lacked the cooperation of the civil government. There was at that time no prohibition against giving liquor to the Indians, and only half-hearted enforcement followed the passage of prohibitory laws.

At last, Rivet received some word from the Secretary of War concerning the plan he had submitted for civilizing the savages. The Secretary merely praised the plan, hoped it would be fulfilled and ordered the commandant to interest himself in Rivet, but he gave no indication that any of Rivet's proposals would

be adopted.²⁴ In his letter of October 26, 1796,²⁵ Rivet then proposed to Carroll that someone else be sent, who could learn the Indian tongue, and that he be left to care for the French population in the various settlements. But Carroll had no extra man to send.

Father Rivet regarded himself as missionary to the Indians of the Wabash and the Illinois. He did not know, any more than the inhabitants of Vincennes, that Father Flaget had gone away not on a visit, but permanently.²⁶ As his plans for the Indians were not yet perfected, he continued to live in the village and to supply the services of the absent pastor. Here, again, he was shocked. Flaget had just begun the work of reform, so necessary after the years of neglect broken only by the unsuccessful attempts of Gibault. Rivet wrote to Bishop Carroll: "The sacred laws of abstinence and fasting are absolutely abandoned and even unknown, our churches are deserted, the assistance of the holy sacrifice on Sundays and feast days is regarded as a simple ceremony to which one may go if he wishes, and from which one more often dispenses himself."²⁷ The marriage situation was even more grave. Without priests, the people had fallen into the habit of only civil marriages or, at times, even of dispensing with the civil officer. Rivet complained of resultant infidelity in some cases and the subsequent neglect of the children. These evils, of course, were not in every family, but they were common enough to cause general scandal. However much Flaget had taught the children, Rivet thought them very ignorant. He could not get them to come to the catechism classes which he offered for them.²⁸ Aroused by such conditions, he was anxious to aid, but his governmental commission made his first interest that of caring for the Indians.

24 Rivet to Carroll, Aug. 6, 1796, 8BD3, AAB.

25 Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1796, 8BD5, AAB.

26 Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

27 Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1795, 8BC4, AAB.

28 Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

For these French of Vincennes, the failure of Rivet's plans for moving among the Indians was a blessing in disguise. From an accidental visitor, awaiting the return of Flaget and the aid and direction of the government, Father Rivet gradually became the resident missionary. Whether writing of his unsuccessful efforts with the Indians, or of the sad state of the French, he signs himself as "Le Pauvre Missionnaire", and the title bespeaks his sense of the sad plight of his missions, Indian and French. The first impressions he gives of the village, as we have noted, were not too flattering to the work of Flaget, unless one remembers that Flaget had just begun. To add to the distress of the French the harvest of 1795 failed,²⁹ and in their impoverished condition this caused severe privations. The next spring, Rivet, having taken upon himself the obligations of pastor of the village, complained that of the 104 or 105 Catholic families³⁰ he had seen at best only 88 persons at the tribunal of penance and fifty-two at the holy table. He could not refrain from asking Bishop Carroll to write a pastoral to these people on the observance of the discipline of the Church. He urged Carroll to insist that the children receive instruction in their religion. In his first census of his parish he found 101 children who, without a schoolmaster, had no means of instruction. Twenty-seven were preparing to make their first communion, but without further instruction he felt the benefit of the sacrament would be lost.

Certain social evils were the chief afflictions of his pastoral heart. Vincennes during this early period gave itself to excessive dancing.³¹ Perhaps the lack of instruction of any kind and the want of other means of entertainment account for the firm attachment to these dancing parties. But Rivet lamented that they were the only school:

²⁹ *Idem.*

³⁰ Rivet to Carroll, May 2, 1796, 8BD1, AAB.

³¹ *Idem.*; Aug. 8, 1797, 8BE1, AAB; Feb. 10, 1798, ADC.

Nocturnal dances are here an unbridled passion. Rich and poor, old and young, even women enceinte, run thither with desperate madness to spend all the night. They even bring children at the breast. Indeed the custom goes so far that the priest is no longer allowed to open his mouth on the subject. Nor are they satisfied with spending the night at it; the holy days of Sunday and of the Feasts are at times wholly spent at dances.³²

Rivet took up at the same time the question of the marriages contracted before the civil magistrate since Gibault's departure. He refused the sacraments to such of these couples as did not come to have their unions blessed by the priest, as the law of the Church required. This punishment brought most offenders to repentance. Later he expressed his helplessness against a few who had so lost their zeal that the refusal of the sacraments no longer deterred them from this irregular practice.³³ As to the Church's laws of fast and abstinence, he found them too strict for these people of the wilderness. Rivet thought that the general dispensation from the observance of the law of abstinence granted to the subjects of the king of Spain should be conceded to these poor French, too. "We hardly eat any other meat here except the product of the chase, and consequently we cannot get meat at will; we are sometimes without it for eight or fifteen days. Then when we least expect it, we suddenly get it from every quarter."³⁴ He did not expect the observance of the Church's whole law but sought a modified abstinence. As to the stipends for church services, he regarded those required by Father Levadoux at Detroit as too high for the poor habitants of Vincennes, and while not wishing to violate any diocesan statutes, he was inclined to accept lower offerings. As a matter of fact he received very little, in all about \$10 in six months for services which included many baptisms, marriages and funerals.

32 Rivet to Carroll, May 2, 1796, 8BD1, AAB.

33 Rivet to Carroll, June 1, 1798, 8BE3, AAB.

34 Rivet to Carroll, May 2, 1796, 8BD1, AAB.

Unfortunately, we have little information about the directions Rivet received in return from Bishop Carroll. One first draft of a letter advised Rivet, as we noted, not to incur expense for taking care of the Indians until he was more regularly and abundantly supplied by the government. Carroll urged him to make the children come to instruction for four years after the first communion, as was done in Baltimore. On the question of dances Carroll gave a word of caution, indicating that perhaps the judgment and complaint of the missionary were too severe.

With respect to dancing, it is a subject to be treated with much circumspection. To lay it under no restraint, would be criminal forbearance in the pastors of souls. It must not be suffered without restriction, as to its frequency nor without limitation, as to certain seasons of the year; nor ever permitted amongst young persons of different sexes, excepting in the presence of some respectable matrons; and the dances must require no attitudes or motions incompatible with virginal modesty. To prohibit dancing entirely would I fear, be a rash exercise of authority and the cause of innumerable sins and drive out of the church.³⁵

Rivet seems to have taken the moderation of the Bishop in good part, and, in a few years, he boasted of having obtained promises that there would be no more Sunday dances, nor dances on feast days.³⁶ But, at another time, he complained that they had begun to dance during Advent and he feared that the season of Lent would be violated next.³⁷ Dancing as a favorite sport and chief amusement continued among the French until the dominance of the invading Americans supplanted the French customs.

As to the organization of the parish finances, Flaget had made a start. He had purchased land, and with the aid of the parishioners had repaired the church and the altar. He had lived most of the time with Colonel Vigo³⁸ or with other members of

35 Carroll to Rivet, rough draft in answer to Rivet's letter of May 4, 1796, 9AD5, AAB.

36 Rivet to Carroll, Feb. 10, 1798, ADC.

37 Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 22, 1802, 8BF6, AAB.

38 Bruté notes of Colonel Vigo, Bruté Notes, UNDA.

the parish. When the parishioners realized that Father Rivet would remain with them, they set about organizing a board of trustees and drawing up rules of administration. Rivet, of course, was the guiding spirit in these developments, but he was not too hopeful that the new rules would be observed. They were drawn up in his hand and sent to Carroll for approval.³⁹ They concerned the renting of the benches in the church, and the handling and preservation of the church furniture. Rivet added in his accompanying note an observation on the necessity of adopting some rule governing the administration of the land acquired by Father Flaget. He had rented it for 400 sous. From this sum he intended to care for the enclosure of the church property and to attempt the construction of dykes to preserve the country from floods. However, he asked Carroll to draw up regulations concerning this land for periods when there would be no priests at Vincennes. Carroll answered, confirming the rules as submitted and adding that during the absence of a priest the tithes should go towards the cost of the upkeep of the tract of land near the church.⁴⁰ Although the minutes were signed by fourteen members of the parish only three apparently were able to write their names: Pierre Gamelin, Dubois—probably Toussaint Dubois—and Pierre Mallet.

Flaget wrote to the trustees on August 10, 1796, offering them his house and land on which they could build a presbytery. The marguilliers had Rivet write a letter of thanks and appointed Francois Tixier as beadle to live in the house. Likewise, on the receipt of Carroll's letter, the trustees wrote the bishop, thanking him, expressing the constant desire of the people for a priest to give Christian instruction and consolation in sickness and promising that they would begin on the morrow

³⁹ *Recueil des règles, usages, actes et autres pièces relatives à la question de la fabrique de la paroisse de St. Francois Xavier du poste Vincennes sur Ouabache*, p. 1. Délibérations de 20 Juillet et jour suivans, VPR; Rivet to Carroll, Aug. 10, 1796, 8BD4, AAB.

⁴⁰ Carroll to the Administrateurs de la fabrique au Post Vincennes, Oct. 19, 1796, UNDA.

to build a presbytery for their pastor. The eleven, who sent this letter, all signed their own names. Likewise, they wrote to Flaget telling of the presbytery they were going to erect. It was to be 37½ feet in length by 18 or 20 feet, with a kitchen, salon, bed room, an "atick" and a cellar. It was to be placed between the church and the house of the beadle and 8 or 10 feet from the church, so that they could erect a sacristy between the two buildings. The secret of their enthusiasm was their joy at having a missionary and their fear that he would leave them as Gibault and Flaget had done.⁴¹

By October, 1796, Rivet had begun to make progress. There was justifiable pride in his report to Carroll:

It is not my habit to discourage in the work of souls, but to always go forward, giving cuffs right and left to all who oppose my progress. People do not listen at first. They laugh and sometimes they make fun of me. They even offer a resistance which seems invincible. But they finally surrender when they see that the welfare of souls is the sole motive of the good missionary. It is by this means that I have managed to establish a fair catechism class, which I have expressly on Sunday for the children who made their first communion this year. The same means succeeded in getting their parents to send the children to catechism every day, and some of them twice a day. I have two [classes] each day, or even three, one in the morning immediately after mass for the smallest ones, and here I lisp with them the sign of the cross and the first elements of the faith and of morals; another in the evening for those who are more advanced in years: and a third at night for those who cannot come to the regular catechism, or are too good to profit by it. So much for the children. But our learned Canadians and our smart women are not so easy to manage. However, I am going to have a novena at the approach of the feast of our venerable patron the blessed St. Francis Xavier. Then every evening there will be prayer at the church with an interesting lecture, and then hymns, and sometimes benediction of the blessed sacrament. This will be ridiculous at first. Hardly anyone but the children will

⁴¹ *Recueil des règles*, etc., pp. 9-13, VPR.

come; then people will become accustomed to it. Then they will find it good, and finally they will come and all because God is good, because he has the heart of a Father, because His mercies are above all his other good works.⁴²

But there was another note in this letter not so pleasant. The tithes were paid only by a few of the people. Although the harvest of 1796 was the best in the history of the settlement, Rivet told Carroll that he would have to go to court to collect all that had been pledged him. The accounts of the parish he found in utter confusion. During the absence of the priests, each administrator had done as he wished with the church goods, wasting considerable property. If he was in debt to the parish at the end of his term, he simply gave note for the amount to his successor. Rivet discovered twenty-five or thirty notes in the bottom of a trunk. They usually burned these notes after a few years, as no one seemed to intend to pay them. As to the church building, the only ornaments on the altar were four wooden candlesticks. There was no confessional. The pews were often nothing but planks thrown together.⁴³ Rivet was living in Flaget's house, but as he had no wood he would be forced to live with the parishioners during the winter. The house would not have been habitable at all but for some aid given by a few generous parishioners, who had little in worldly goods but great affection for him.

About this time, in 1796, Vincennes was visited by Constantin F. Volney,⁴⁴ the French writer and traveler, who later discussed in his book on the United States the decay of the French settlements on the Wabash and the Mississippi. He gave the opinions of both French and American inhabitants on the causes for the impoverishment of the French and was inclined to favor the opinions of the Americans on the French indolence. He showed his bias by adding that these were the

⁴² Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1796, 8BD5, AAB.

⁴³ Rivet to Carroll, Aug. 6, 1796, 8BD3, AAB.

⁴⁴ Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-351.

French of Louis XIV. A free-thinking liberal Frenchman of post-revolutionary France, he blamed the backwardness which he observed on the absence of the enlightenment of the Revolution. Rivet enjoyed Volney's visit. The Abbé argued with Volney that, contrary to the opinions of the Americans, the condition of the French colony was the result of the

evils of every kind which they had to suffer from the American government, and especially from the Indian war. It is certain that the State has cruelly mistreated them, that the country has been given to pillage, that no right has been observed in their regard, that they have made advances amounting to enormous sums and immense works, that nothing had been paid to them, that the subsequent fall of bank notes completed the total ruin of the country. The lay clerk of the church with whom I live lost 25,838 dollars, and so it is with others. They have often been promised indemnification, and nothing has come of it.⁴⁵

Rivet and the inhabitants decided to have Volney present their case to the government and gave him full power to act as their agent, supplying him with data. For his trouble he was to receive a share of the land which they sought. Rivet noted in his letter to Carroll that part of the demands of the people on this occasion included a college for the instruction of the youth of the village—an idea that shows an enlightenment as advanced as the "sixteenth section" in the American grant for education. But unfortunately Volney never seems to have done anything about this commission in the name of the Vincennes settlement, or to have explained his failure.

During Volney's ⁴⁶ visit Rivet arranged for one of the councils which the savages periodically held in his house. The Indians, through their interpreters, praised the French for the great service which they had rendered the Indians in times past and gave to Volney a necklace for the French as a token of their former friendship. Nothing of importance was said at

⁴⁵ Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 26, 1796, 8BD5, AAB.

⁴⁶ Volney, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-7 and 382.

the gathering, but to Rivet's chagrin the commandant, suspicious of French intrigue, conducted a secret investigation of the affair, questioning the interpreter and other witnesses until Rivet himself protested against the insinuation.

Father Rivet's sombre reports caused Bishop Carroll to propose that the missionary be sent from Vincennes to help Father Michael Levadoux, the Vicar General of the western missions, who wanted a man to take charge on the Raisin River south of Detroit. Apparently Levadoux⁴⁷ felt that Rivet was doing better work at Vincennes and feared the damage that would come from any change.

While Rivet was disappointed in the failure of the French to contribute properly to his support, he was unwilling to concede defeat. His efforts were beginning to bear fruit, and he saw that to leave the settlement without a priest would destroy all that he had accomplished. Alarmed at the suggestion of his removal, the parishioners, with Pierre Gamelin as amanuensis, wrote to Carroll begging him not to take Rivet from them, promising to set aside a definite amount to be given the pastor for his services and to build a presbytery. They insisted that they were all ready to walk the good way and felt that it would be the greatest misfortune to be deprived of Christian instruction for their children, and of the sacraments for their sick. On the back of their letter Rivet told the bishop that, while their intentions were good, their promises could not be accepted at face value.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Carroll decided against a transfer.

Rivet's life in Vincennes continued in the same channels. The parishioners became more and more regular in their observance of the laws of the Church, and the priest seems to have won their respect. Writing on June 1, 1798⁴⁹ he complained that the most remiss were the older ones. Apparently past neglect had affected their zeal. Sometimes it took violent

47 Levadoux to Carroll, May 27, 1797, 4Y11, AAB.

48 Parishioners of St. Francis to Carroll and Rivet to Carroll, May 14, 1797, ADC.

49 Rivet to Carroll, June 1, 1798, 8BE3, AAB.

action to bring the habitants to the observance of the marriage laws, but now that regular parish life had been resumed, such action could be used. The Minutes of the Trustees ⁵⁰ relate how, after announcing that to go before a judge for marriage was a veritable apostasy, Rivet finally publicly excommunicated Jean Baptiste Calontière and Geneviève Bonneau, widow of Charles Villeneuve, for getting married in this way. However, they entered their protestation of submission on March 3, 1799, and were received back into the Church. Another problem that continued to bother Rivet was incessant dancing. Writing on February 10, 1798,⁵¹ he said that dancing was a craze among the people of all ages, both sexes and of all conditions. He found it ineffective to demand public penance for dancing on Sunday; but he did succeed in getting a promise that there would be no dancing on Sundays, very little on Saturday evening, except during the octaves of Christmas and Easter and in certain other circumstances. As to the enforcement of the laws of fast and abstinence, he had made little progress. He continued to regard the villagers as excused from the full law, dependent as they were upon the chase for their meat.

On July 23, 1797, Rivet took possession of his new presbytery, but it was unfinished and during the winter months he had to board with one of his parishioners. His description of the defects of the presbytery is almost humorous:

The Priest's bedroom was so small that it was practically impossible to put anything in place. The fireplace was so low that it resembled an oven and did not give out any heat. The construction of this fireplace was so faulty that one could make fire in one compartment as easily as in the other and both of them would instantly be filled with dense smoke. Also the enormous weight of this chimney was rested on no foundation and very close to the cellar so that it threatened to collapse and would have brought down a part of the house, and perhaps crushed any persons who might be near.⁵²

⁵⁰ In VPR.

⁵¹ Rivet to Carroll, Feb. 10, 1798, ADC.

⁵² Note by Rivet in VPR.

Strangely, the Abbé's health improved and his popularity with the people, likewise, seemed to increase. In the spring of 1799⁵³ they wanted to elect him to the Territorial Assembly at Cincinnati, and one of the parishioners offered to give him the necessary land to entitle him to hold the office, but he declined. He did, however, accept an appointment to be tax commissioner.

That Rivet continued his work among the Indians is evidenced by the recurring records of their baptism and burial. Most of these Indians were in or near the village, and Rivet was anxious to start a catchism class for their children. To succeed in this he found it necessary to give them something from time to time, such as a pound of bread. But in his reduced circumstances, he had nothing to give.⁵⁴ The gifts of the government to the Indians, usually trinkets, were doing them no good. Again he wrote to the Secretary of War asking that something useful be presented to the Indians instead of these useless trifles. On Nov. 24, 1801⁵⁵ the secretary of War wrote him expressing a willingness to give part of the annuities to the Indians in agricultural implements, but nothing was really accomplished. Rivet expressed a hope for the Indians of the St. Joseph among whom he believed he could do something. All the others, he said, came to the village merely to drink, and their debaucheries were so evil that he yearned for their return to their villages. His descriptions of the horrors of these drunken orgies are very similar to those of Governor William Henry Harrison, written a few years later :

Our village is stained with blood every day. The law, very contrary, it seems to me to what it should be, prohibits the sale of intoxicating drinks outside the village, but it permits any quantity desired to be poured out for the savages in the village. Here is an inexhaustible source of quarrels, thefts, murders, and disorders of all kinds. Not long ago, a young savage, a son of a great chief, was killed by a negro. A white man was wounded in the side by the stab

53 Rivet to Carroll, Mar. 12, 1799, 8BF4, AAB.

54 Rivet to Carroll, April 5, 1797, ADC.

55 Indian Office, Letter Book A, pp. 124-5.

of a knife, the savage who wounded him was stabbed by another white man. A mother of a family, one of the singers of the choir, found herself shot at twice by a savage, but God permitted both shots to go wild. A father of a family was set upon by a savage with a knife in his hand, and only escaped death by aiming his gun at the savage.⁵⁶

Writing on June 1, 1798,⁵⁷ Rivet indicated that subordinating his plans to the wishes of the government, he was limiting himself to baptizing a few children and some of the adults who were sick. But whether he meant he was prohibited from doing more, or simply restricted himself because the lawless conditions of the Indians rendered other services useless, he did not make clear. Besides these functions, he endeavored to promote peace and good will toward the government. He met another obstacle even in this limited work. The Catholic Church requires certain elements of faith in the savage adult for the reception of baptism. With only a short instruction in time of sickness, Rivet found it practically impossible to give the savage a proper knowledge of the Trinity and the Incarnation. His interpreter, who was a Christian woman, confined herself to telling a dying savage of God's work as a Rewarder who had died for mankind. Rivet did the best he could under such unusual conditions, but wrote to Carroll of his scruples.

On October 25, 1800⁵⁸ Madame Marie, his interpreter, died and Rivet found it necessary to suspend his work among the Indians. He had no money with which to hire a new interpreter. His pay was not coming, he was already in debt, and he felt greatly the injustice in having to spend his meager salary, if it did come, to employ an interpreter. When Father Peter Janin left Kaskaskia, Rivet endeavored to obtain through St. Clair⁵⁹ Janin's salary too, basing his claim on the money

56 Rivet to Carroll, Aug. 8, 1797, 8BE1, AAB.

57 Rivet to Carroll, June 1, 1798, 8BE3, AAB.

58 Rivet to Carroll, July 8, 1800, ADC; Rivet, *Livre Journal*, p. 10, UNDA.

59 Rivet to Arthur St. Clair (Received Feb., 1799), St. Clair Papers, Ohio State Library.

he had lost in interest on his borrowings, while awaiting his pay and on the work he did in Janin's place in the Illinois country, where he tried to go at least once a year. But apparently the request was given no consideration. After about two years' delay he received part of his salary from Captain Thomas Pasteur, the commandant. The next payment came through Father Levadoux and was likewise delayed.⁶⁰

The conscientious Rivet now began to scruple about his title to the \$200 promised by the government for his missionary activities among the Indians.⁶¹ He realized that his plans for conversions among the Indians were doomed to disappointment. His first ardor, misinformed by the glowing descriptions of the savages given him in the East, was chilled when he found his intended subjects the slaves of liquor and vice. Blocked by the difficulty of learning the Indian languages without the aid of dictionaries and grammars, unable to secure even the minimum essentials of livelihood among the Indian villages, he now had to limit himself to baptizing those who were in danger of death, and speaking to them of peace and good will towards the American government. Only two dozen Indian names appear on the baptismal register during his eight years. To this good man there was reason for scruple.

Rivet confessed these doubts to his new friend, Governor William Henry Harrison, who quickly reassured him of his right to the pay. Later, when one of the officers at the post made some complaint against Rivet, Harrison wrote to Secretary of War, Henry Dearborn, praising Rivet, going so far as to insist that he wished there were two or three more such missionaries working among the Indians.⁶² Dearborn then wrote back that Harrison should keep Rivet at his post as long as Rivet was willing to remain.⁶³

⁶⁰ Receipts signed by Levadoux and Pasteur, A.G.O., Old Records Division; A.S.P., Indian Affairs, I, p. 540.

⁶¹ Rivet to Carroll, Mar. 12, 1799, 8BE4, AAB.

⁶² Rivet to Carroll, July 18, 8BF3, AAB; Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁶³ Dearborn to Harrison, Dec. 22, 1801, Letter Book A, Indian Office.

The priest's own defense, written to Carroll, October 10, 1801, is a better statement of his claims on the gratitude both of the savage and of the government which had hired him to civilize and educate the Indians. In his sorrow and disappointment at the failure of his larger plans he could yet write:

In effect, I employ all my strength for the spiritual and temporal happiness of these poor Indians. I enlighten them in their doubts, I reassure them in their fears. I settle, when I can, their quarrels. I visit them assiduously in their sicknesses, employ at my own expense an interpreter for these various duties, and finally I give them the last succors of religion and aid them to die well. This is all the present state of things allows me to do for them, and, it seems to me, the greatest service that the United States can render to these poor unfortunates.⁶⁴

But he was not content. At the time he wrote the foregoing letter he had a new project to gather the Indians into a village along the Wabash, where they could be taught the arts of agriculture. But in this, as in all the projects which required cooperation of the government, he failed. Governor Harrison was indeed his friend and seconded him in these enterprises and continued to quiet any scruples that arose in the good priest's mind over the paucity of his accomplishments. But the task of civilizing the Wabash Indians was beyond the power of one man, when the evil influences were legion. Rivet was the last Indian missionary to work in the state for nearly a generation. After his death occasional entries of Indian baptisms, deaths and marriages are found on the Vincennes baptismal register, but wars and debaucheries prevented the few missionaries in this western country from doing much for the Indian tribes.

It is interesting to note that Rivet's confidence that something could be done among the Potawatomi of the St. Joseph was confirmed when, under Chief Pokagon, a large group of them revived their Christian tradition, learned first from the Jesuit missionaries, under the care of Fathers Badin, DeSeille

⁶⁴ Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 10, 1801, ADC.

and Petit. But Rivet had no such success. His zeal could not overcome the handicap of inexperience and lack of means. The difference between his plans and his accomplishments was as great as that between his seminary atmosphere and the wilderness of the Wabash. Great was his disappointment, but it prepared him well for the difficulties he faced among the French settlers.

Meanwhile the number of Americans at Vincennes was increasing, and Father Rivet found many friends among them. The commandant, Captain Thomas Pasteur, and the officers at the post treated him with respect, except for the incident of the council of the savages with Volney. When the officials complained of the work of Father Edmund Burke at Detroit in siding with the British, Rivet hastened to inform Carroll and urged Burke's removal.⁶⁵ Although suffering because his pay was delayed, he did not complain to the Secretary of War lest he should get some of the junior officers in trouble. He did report to his superiors that migrating Americans pillaged the settlements, but he did not blame the American settlers of Vincennes for the misfortunes of the French. He complained, rather, of governmental neglect in times past and of the damage done by the troops from Kentucky. His relations with General Arthur St. Clair or Winthrop Sargent do not seem to have been close. With Hamtramck, until his removal, he maintained a measure of friendship, and his relations with Harrison seem to have been a source of great consolation. The general invited him frequently to his house.⁶⁶ After Harrison's family came to Vincennes, it was arranged that Rivet would have charge of the education of the son, John Cleves Symmes Harrison, then only about four years old. At the same time Rivet was instructing the sons of the judges. Harrison had plans for establishing a college and had arranged with Rivet to teach the Latin and to assist in other ways. The General was not content to defend Rivet against his critics, he praised the priest as one "constant

⁶⁵ Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 11, 1796, 8BC5, AAB.

⁶⁶ Rivet to Carroll, Jan. 22, 1802, 8BF6; Nov. 6, 1803, 8BH8, AAB.

in his exertions to diffuse principles of sobriety and justice amongst the Indians, and to cause them to respect the authority of the United States.”⁶⁷

The eight and a half years of Father Rivet's missionary activity at Vincennes represent in smaller scope the whole story of the relation between earlier Vincennes and later Indiana. His ambitious plans for the civilization and education of the Indians represent the French Catholic ideal of Indian training, but they were out of place in the American scheme of handling Indians. He was defeated by the same forces that checked the earlier attempts of the French to civilize the Indians—liquor and the avarice of the trader, complicated now by the land encroachments of the American frontiersmen. Rivet witnessed the change of Vincennes from a declining French village to an American frontier town. The French were impoverished, ignorant, despondent under a series of adversities, and decadent from long absence of religious instruction. He revived their religious practices, curbed their vicious tendencies, established schools, and encouraged them to overcome their material obstacles. He never succeeded in reestablishing the French influence, because the community had changed—had become American, with new ideals. The newcomers were too well established, and too well financed to lose their dominant position.

Rivet's remarkable efforts are more admirable when we recall that he was a man of poor health. At first, the persistent fevers of the neighborhood kept him ill. Then, his work began to tell on him. Richard had written to Carroll that Rivet was working too hard, and that his health would not long stand the strain.⁶⁸ Rivet, finding that after a few years he had become used to the climate and enjoyed fairly good health, did not spare himself. If, however, as seems probable, Rivet had tuberculosis, he knew

⁶⁷ Rivet to Carroll, July 18, 1801, 8BF3, AAB; Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Esarey omits this paragraph in praise of Rivet from Harrison's *Messages and Letters* without justification, as Dawson is given as his source. Further the passage is implied in the answer of Dearborn to Harrison of which there is a copy in the Indian office.

⁶⁸ Richard to Carroll, April 20, 1798, 7B5, AAB.

that his renewed health could not last long; and while he did not make his illness a subject of his letters, except in drawing up his plans for his successor, he had prepared for his going. In April, 1800 he drew up elaborate instructions for his burial. For nearly four years after that he continued to spend his strength in the service of his mission. At last in January, 1804 he felt his strength leaving him. His last entry on the registers was January 31. He had sent for Father Donatien Olivier, the missionary at Kaskaskia. Olivier hastened, but the "Poor Missionary" died on February 13,⁶⁹ before his arrival. Tradition says that the dying priest had himself carried to the church where he administered to himself Holy Communion.⁷⁰ Rivet had written out his last confession for Olivier, who arrived February 27⁷¹ and assumed in his place the care of Vincennes along with the several missions he already had. After Rivet's death the Mission of Vincennes lapsed into the condition of neglect and lethargy from which the accident of the French Revolution had saved it for more than a decade. Now the help from that source was withdrawn. Olivier, Badin, Nerinckx and Flaget visited the place occasionally during the next fifteen years, but no resident pastor came. It was indeed regrettable that the work of Flaget and Rivet could not have been carried on and perfected. But the fact remains that, without these twelve years of resident pastorate, Vincennes and its French settlements might have lapsed into savagery.

The number of Catholics in the village at the death of Rivet cannot be ascertained. His own estimate was less than the estimates of the earlier missionaries. He spoke of only 300 communicants⁷² and 104 or 105 families. By communicants he evidently meant adults who had made their first communion. This would make the total population about 700 or 800. During the period of suffering and Indian wars it is known that some

69 Badin to Carroll, Mar. 26, 1804, RACHS, XXIII, pp. 141-74.

70 Bruté in *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 185.

71 (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 124.

72 Rivet to Carroll, May 2, 1796, 8BD1, AAB.

families migrated across the Mississippi from the French settlements. The survey for the Donation Lands in 1804⁷³ listed several families which had moved to Missouri or to New Orleans. Hamtramck in one of his letters before his removal spoke of 250⁷⁴ persons going to the new settlements at New Madrid. He does not say that they were all French, and since Colonel Morgan, the leader of at least one settlement, was an American, we may presume that others of the party were also American. However, the New Madrid Archives contain the names of several former Vincennes French who had crossed the Mississippi. The number of Americans in Vincennes likewise is not certain. Of these there were some Catholics. Gibault had entered Graiss, Condon, Smith on his baptismal register. Flaget entered the names of Murphy and Small, and mentioned an unnamed American soldier. Rivet inscribed the names of Vanderburgh, Judge William Clark, Higgins, Mouseley, Merry, Smake and Hall. Some of these were soldiers at the fort, others were settlers from Kentucky. Then, too, as in the case of Judge Clark, there were conversions to the faith, though they were not numerous among the Americans because of Rivet's difficulty with the English tongue.

Despite the passing of numerous French to other regions and the introduction of Americans, Vincennes remained a French and Catholic settlement. The only church of the village was Catholic, and while the building was not much to boast of, under the encouragement of Flaget and, especially, of Rivet the population returned to regular habits of church attendance. While not many Indians became Catholic, Olivier found some among those who came to confess their sins on his visits⁷⁵ after the death of Rivet. All who attended church services in Vincennes, whether Indian or white, attended the services in the Catholic Church. The only school that was undertaken in the

⁷³ A.S.P., *Public Lands*, I, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Hamtramck to Harmar, April 14, 1791; Harmar Papers, XIV, WLCL.

⁷⁵ Olivier to Urbain Guillet, May 16, 1806, *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, Lyon, 1837, I, p. 55.

village at this time, that conducted by a Mr. Mackdonas in the presbytery,⁷⁶ was under the direction, if not the tutelage, of Father Rivet. The chief moderating influence in the moral life of the town was the voice of the pastor limiting the extremes of the dance and pleading against the excess of liquor.

Socially and economically, however, the Catholics were going into eclipse in comparison with the new citizens from the East and South. Flaget and Rivet found the French impoverished. Poverty was the more disheartening because it included, in a sense, the lack of means of raising themselves out of their sad state. Children of soldiers and fur traders, they found their old trades gone. Those who were farmers had been forced by the Indian raids during the seventeen eighties to give up any idea of extensive farming. Then, with the coming of the American government, which claimed all the territory as it was transferred from the Indians, the French found themselves without much land, without means of exploitation, without money. Their claims against the state of Virginia and the American government were never paid. The claims in land were compromised, but in such a way that the original claimants seldom benefited much from the settlement. Perhaps, one should not place too much emphasis upon the fact, but it is startling to find that when the actual claims for government land were settled, only 17 French names appear among those to whom the land was finally confirmed out of 245 French names to whom the grants were originally given.⁷⁷ Even in 1790 Sargent⁷⁸ had listed 143 names, nearly all French, who were entitled to the donation lands. Of the 141 smaller grants claimed by the inhabitants at the time of the survey in 1790,⁷⁹ the number that remained in the possession of the French is not shown by the records, since they were not in question in the surveys of 1804

⁷⁶ Rivet to Carroll, Oct. 10, 1801, ADC.

⁷⁷ A.S.P., *Public Lands*, I, pp. 9-15.

⁷⁸ Sargent to Samuel Baird, July 13, 1790, TPUS, II, pp. 285-7.

⁷⁹ A.S.P., *Public Lands*, I, pp. 11-15.

and 1806. The genealogical and legal⁸⁰ data necessary to trace in detail the history of this transfer of land are not available.⁸⁰

The French maintained that they had been wheedled out of their claims. The Americans said the French were careless and ignorant of the value of their lands. Ignorant of their speculative value they might well have been in comparison with some of the speculators who were in the vanguard of the American frontier, but carelessness in matters of business is seldom a trait of the Frenchman. Father Rivet seems to have offered a better explanation, when he indicated to Volney that the French were so impoverished that they had to part with their lands for what they could get. They had no money for exploitation or for long term investment. Volney, who seemed to take sides with the Americans against the French, betrayed, in so doing, the commission given him by Father Rivet and the settlers of Vincennes.

It is useless to blame either the craftiness of the American land dealers, or the ignorance and carelessness of the French for the poor economic and social conditions of these settlements at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But the fact of impoverishment is important in explaining the failure of these earlier French settlers to influence in greater measure the subsequent social and political institutions of Indiana. Their accomplishments, considered in the light of the history of their difficulties, while not more numerous or important, are at least more significant. Their fidelity to their religious faith under such trials thus became more remarkable; and their contribution to later Catholicism in the community remains a bequest of inestimable value. Since no later French migration followed the pioneers, the Americans who built in the Middle West have received most of the credit for the foundation work of the French.

⁸⁰ The Vigo Mss. in the Harrison House at Vincennes contain many deeds concerning the transfer of these titles. Vigo gathered in many titles but lost them in his later financial difficulties.

So likewise in the religious history of Indiana, the appearance of later immigrants with their churches and schools are sometimes credited with the beginning of Catholicism in the state. But it must be remembered that the pioneer work had been done by the French and if, in a later day, they lacked the means or the zeal to perfect their work, they did furnish the important foundation stones of the present edifice.

CHAPTER IV

NEGLECTED VINCENNES

WHEN the parishioners of St. Francis laid to rest the body of their beloved Father Rivet, they could not have realized how much they were to miss his zeal during the next fifteen years. The nearest priest was Father Donatien Olivier in the missions of Illinois, whom Rivet had summoned. He arrived too late to receive orally the last words of the dying priest. Uncertainty clouds the date of Olivier's arrival, but it seems that Rivet had been buried several days. Rivet had left his testament,¹ and directions for his successors, but the gentle Father Olivier had troubles enough in his own missions and he did not welcome new ones. He hastened to write to Father Stephen Theodore Badin at Bardstown, Kentucky, announcing the death and asking the counsel of that veteran missionary. Badin at once sent on the melancholy news to Bishop Carroll. He wrote to both Olivier and Carroll that he thought Olivier should leave the poverty-stricken missions of the Illinois country² and take up his residence at Vincennes, where the labors of Rivet had acquired for his successor a house and some land.

Father Badin's argument was that of an experienced missionary. "M. R. left to his successor all his estate and there is danger of its being squandered away, if a clergyman takes not soon possession thereof; the Congregation of St. Vincent by the vigilance, labours and prayers of their late Pastor appears to be very fervent and much respected by other denominations as I have been informed by travellers." But even as Badin wrote this message to Carroll, Father Olivier returned to his Illinois missions. Carroll sympathized deeply with the neglected habitants of Vincennes; but efforts to succor them were unavailing. He had few priests. Badin could not leave Bardstown. Often had Rivet³ asked him to come for a visit, but this great

1 A copy of this with inventory of his belongings in VPR.

2 Badin to Carroll, Mar. 26, 1804, RACHS, XXIII, pp. 151-2.

3 Badin to Carroll, Aug. 4, 1796, RACHS, XIX, p. 268.

missionary would not chance the death of any of his people without the sacraments. Olivier at Kaskaskia was really in the center of the Illinois country, more so than if he were at Vincennes. He made no effort to move, nor is it certain that he desired to change his residence, or to leave his own mission.

Carroll then turned to Detroit and endeavored to secure one of the missionaries there—Richard, Levadoux, or Dilhet—but without success.⁴ The accident of French history that had given Rivet, Badin, Olivier and Richard to these western missions had only loaned Dilhet and Levadoux and, after the Revolution, they were recalled to France. The ravaged churches of France needed all the priests they could get. On the other hand, a native American clergy proportionate to the needs was out of the question, as the Sulpicians had scarcely enough students in their seminary to make it worth their time to employ a faculty. Vincennes, neglected and deprived of schools, could not furnish a candidate. The first native priest of Vincennes in modern times, Simon Petit Lahumiere, was born the year of Rivet's death and baptized by Olivier on November 11.⁵ So once more the embers of faith, which had again been fanned into flame by the energy of Rivet, were to lose their brilliance and be kept alive only by the occasional labors of visiting clergymen.

The tendency to cultural decline, as manifested in this frontier settlement, is nothing unusual in early American history. Frontier settlements, from the days of the old West to the days of the cowboy, have never been distinguished by flourishing institutions or religious discipline. The struggle for livelihood, and, in the case of early Vincennes, the nearness of Indian warfare left little time for cultural interests. Vincennes had to be content with its little chapel, where the faithful gathered each Sunday and feast day to say their prayers. There, likewise, they assembled for baptisms and marriages and were encouraged by

⁴ Carroll to the Catholics of Vincennes, Sept. 6, 1806, Georgetown Archives.

⁵ Baptismal register, VPR. There was a Father Anthony Foucher, born July 22, 1741 at Oniatenon who became a parish priest in Canada, dying in 1812; cf. Shea, *Catholic Church in Colonial Days*, p. 578.

occasional visiting missionaries. Of schools, except for the sporadic attempts of the missionaries, they had none. The village was soon to boast the name of a university but it never became more than a name. Such educational opportunity as it offered was decidedly elementary. There were none of the natural props of religion. Only the earnestness and fidelity of the people kept alive the ideals of their religion, but these ideals, in turn, saved the faithful from savagery.

Another cause of decline concurrent with the lack of missionaries and lack of social institutions, was the constant Indian warfare. War is ever degrading; it was particularly so in the form of brutal Indian conflicts. The soldiers who visited Vincennes, going to and from the wars, were mostly of the rough, undisciplined, frontier militia. At the same time, the Indian raids upset the fur trade of the Wabash, and in general hampered economic progress. While the conflict ultimately opened new fields for immigration, such benefits did not accrue to the French settlers. Their holdings were so small and their capital so meager that the rise in valuations scarcely affected them. They seemed always to lose.

The importance of all the French settlements decreased with the gradual breaking up of the old Northwest Territory into states and other territories. Ohio became a state in 1803, and soon had several towns more important than Vincennes. As Indiana Territory grew in population the American settlements along the Ohio forged to the front. These new pioneers brought with them American institutions and methods—county government, courts, land systems, roads, speculation and political parties.⁶ Perhaps the newcomers had no intention of ignoring the French settlers along the Wabash. Had the French joined in with the Americans, taken quickly to the English language and backed their own candidates for office, the story might have been different. Instead, the French, as a class, failed to take a proper part in democratic government. They were content to accept the promises of Americans who appealed to their votes,

⁶ Logan Esarey, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

seeking as a result only their own local welfare. The transfer of the capital of Indiana Territory from Vincennes to Corydon may have been made for other reasons, but it was symbolic of the decline of French influence in the politics of the territory.

The French quickly lost social prestige. The leaders of the community were no longer French, although a few of them, such as Hyacinthe Lasselle, retained some power in the community. The Americans were progressive, fostering schools, introducing a press, taking an interest in internal improvements and participating in the politics of the day. The new immigration from the South and East added to their importance, and they, in turn, found themselves ready to give leadership to the newcomers because they belonged in the same general tradition. Had the French associated with fidelity to their religion the progressive methods of their American neighbors, they would have provided a better foundation for the later Catholics to build upon. Had they retained leadership in the commercial and educational life of the village, their church, the one church of Vincennes, might have had many more communicants.

The religious leader to whom they had to turn after Rivet's death lacked, however, the progressiveness of either Flaget or Rivet. He was not capable of shaking them out of their lethargy and showing them how to adopt American ways. Donatien Olivier, and his brother Jean, coming from the diocese of Nantes, had visited Vincennes on their way to the Illinois country in 1799.⁷ Donatien took charge of the missions at Prairie du Rocher and Kaskaskia where Rivet, as Vicar General of the Illinois country, occasionally visited him. He was not of the aggressive type, else the poverty and neglect which he endured might have forced him to forsake his missions. His chief virtues were patience and gentleness. No one speaks a harsh word of him. He endured patiently his impoverishment; and when he found himself saddled with the added burden of Vincennes he did not complain. Father Stephen Badin, who was almost the opposite in temperament, urged him to move

⁷ Rivet to Carroll, Mar. 12, 1799, 8BE4, AAB.

to Vincennes and told Bishop Carroll that Olivier scrupled to ask for the change, lest the people think him covetous of the Vincennes property. Badin wrote of him: "He is a gentleman of delicate feelings and perhaps too timorous conscience, who breathes nothing but the love of God."⁸ There is no evidence that Carroll ever accepted the suggestion of Badin or that Olivier sought to make the change. As a result Vincennes was once more without a resident pastor. Olivier tended to it only in semi-annual or annual visits.

On his first visit Olivier seems merely to have taken care of the business that had arisen since the sickness of Father Rivet. The trustees' minutes do not indicate that he tried to carry out Rivet's will. He was not the type of man to argue forcefully with a group of aggressive trustees. He returned, then, to the Illinois mission after writing to Badin on March 6, 1804. The trustees wrote to Bishop Carroll begging him to send them a resident missionary; but no one came. Olivier returned later in the year, on November 4,⁹ and in the absence of a resident pastor, exercised his ministry, baptizing, marrying and visiting the sick until November 16, when he returned to his own missions. In 1805 Olivier spent from July 1 to July 15 at Vincennes. In April, 1806, Fathers Stephen Theodore Badin and Charles Nerinckx took care of the mission for a few days, but they had to pass on to their own work in Kentucky. Olivier came again to Vincennes on November 16, 1806, and continued his ministry until December 1. He wrote to Carroll¹⁰ that the citizens had heard with pleasure from Flaget that they were going to get a resident priest, but that a second letter from their old pastor, contradicting the report, had plunged them into gloom. Their growing neglect of the laws of fast and abstinence Olivier excused, because of the failure of the authorities to grant proper dispensations. During his

8 Badin to Carroll, Mar. 26, 1804, RACHS, XXVIII, pp. 151-2.

9 Olivier to M. Antoine Petit Lalumiere, May 24, 1805, Baptismal register, VPR.

10 Olivier to Carroll, June 8, 1806, 6B8, AAB.

visitation he had the old difficulties of straightening out the marriages contracted in his absence before the justice of the peace. But Olivier did not say much about conditions at Vincennes in 1806. He left that to Badin and Nerinckx, who had written to Carroll. His next visit to Vincennes was made in 1808, from May 1 until May 30. In the meantime, he reported to Carroll on the conditions in his four missions and with the support of Father Badin deplored the conditions in Vincennes. Badin was so shocked by the religious situation, according to Olivier,¹¹ that he withdrew suddenly rather than take the responsibility of correcting the villagers.

Olivier complained that the abuses which Rivet had fought so valiantly had multiplied. He found few prepared to receive communion. The love of pleasures, especially dancing, was again carried to extremes, particularly on Sundays and feast days. The Friday abstinence was observed only by a few who had made their first communion the preceding year. The lack of religious ceremony had led to grave ills in the practice of marriage. There were more frequent quarrels in families, which led husbands and wives to separate and to consort with others of like situation. Some sought other marriages before the civil officers, and once Olivier was approached to bless such a marriage. To prevent as much evil as he could, Olivier set up new regulations. The marriages performed before the justice of the peace, in the absence of a priest, were valid, but he required the parties to present themselves before the priest and receive the nuptial blessing. Those who had objected to appearing before the civil magistrates, and had wed privately, were not married and were obliged to be married by the priest. Those who remarried without proof that their previous consorts were dead, were required to separate from their new partners. Of the lenten fasts, Olivier complained that the parishioners did not keep even the three days required by their dispensation.

The Catholic citizens of Vincennes were not ignorant of their faults. Many remained faithful and regretted the scandal of

11 Olivier to Carroll, Mar. 2, 1807, 6B7, AAB.

others. A committee wrote to Bishop Carroll begging him once more to obtain for them a resident pastor. They told the Bishop of the dangers that threatened their children and themselves, unless regular services were soon reestablished, and they reminded him of the arrangements made by Rivet. Bishop Carroll, indeed, had not forgotten them. He lacked priests. Finally he settled upon two Jesuits, Francis Maleve and John Henry to go to Vincennes. So anxious were the parishoners for a pastor, while Olivier was at Vincennes in December, 1806,¹² they raised \$100 for the travelling expenses from Baltimore to Vincennes of the priest who would come to them. This they deposited with Toussaint Dubois, to be paid to the priest at the order of Father Badin or Bishop Carroll. Unfortunately, both Maleve and Henry died before they reached the village. Olivier, the gentle, quiet laborer, continued to care for Vincennes in the time that he could ill spare from his other missions.

On September 26, 1808, Father Urbain Guillet, a Trappist, who was having difficulties establishing his community in the West, visited Vincennes and performed three baptisms and one marriage. He thought at the time of establishing his monastery there and of devoting his community to the care of the Indians,¹³ but soon abandoned the idea. After his visit, A. Zepherin Chenet took upon himself the task of notary and performed two baptisms. But Chenet was not a religious person, and Olivier, when he returned, forbade him ever again to take upon himself these tasks.¹⁴ Olivier was in residence from November 25, 1809 until December 26. His next visit was made in September, 1810. While on this visitation, he was overtaken by illness and was confined to his bed. Father Badin, the patriarch of these western missions, who visited him during his illness, also performed some baptisms among the Indians and subsequently wrote a letter to Carroll about Vincennes. In 1811 Olivier visited the mission from September 1 until October

12 Badin to Carroll, Jan. 3, 1807, 111, AAB.

13 Fr. Urbain to the Bishop of Quebec, E.U., III-112, AAQ.

14 Badin to Carroll, Sept. 26, 1810, 110, AAB.

14, baptizing 43 persons but marrying only 4 couples. In 1812, probably because of the Indian wars, there was no priestly visitor to Vincennes. During this time Francis Mallet performed the task of notary and registered the baptisms and other religious ceremonies. On his next visit, in 1813, Olivier stayed a month from October 18 to November 15. The following year he made his final visitation to Vincennes, preparing for the first episcopal visitation, and, before his departure, the former pastor, Flaget, now the Bishop of Bardstown, came back to his old mission.

Olivier can scarcely be considered as pastor of Vincennes. Even as visiting missionary he had few of the qualities of a good administrator, if we may judge from the observations of Father Badin. However, considering the briefness of his visits, there is room for the opinion that he might have managed better had he remained on the scene. His gentleness endeared him to all who knew him, but he did practically nothing about the property and the possessions which the energy of Rivet had prepared for his successor. Badin wrote of him to Carroll:

He is an admirable man for his zeal and sanctity. But his great simplicity is a check to his usefulness in a country so corrupted. Religion shall soon disappear from this parish, if not supplied with a Pastor equally firm and gentle, of great sanctity and patience. The church property is so badly managed that Mousr. Olivier as well as myself have always to defray our travelling expenses which will be \$50 for him.¹⁵

But while Badin, not inclined to praise, speaks of the failures of Olivier, we know that the missionary did keep alive the religious practices of the neglected church for nearly ten years. There were always some faithful souls, as the church registers indicate, and they were more numerous than the unfaithful. These Olivier comforted and encouraged, promising them that better days would come for the church at Vincennes.

¹⁵ Badin to Carroll, Sept. 21, 1810, 1J10, AAB.

The two great missionaries who visited Vincennes in 1806 are perhaps the most colorful of the later missionaries of the Middle West. Father Stephen Theodore Badin was originally from the diocese of Orleans. Driven from France by the French Revolution, he was the first priest¹⁶ ordained in the United States, on May 25, 1793. He became a missionary in Kentucky in 1795, and remained active in the diocese of Bardstown until 1818. Later as a missionary extraordinary of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois, he contributed more than any other individual to the foundation of the Catholic Church of the Ohio river and Great Lakes regions. A stern character, in his piety he represented the reform group that had striven to save French Catholicism from the corruption fostered by the royal court. He was uncompromising towards the evils of dancing and liquor. His strict interpretations of the laws of the Church caused protests from his own fellow workers in Kentucky. Yet despite his sternness he was an attractive character. A small slight man, he displayed remarkable strength of body and spirit. He had a sense of humor in his severity. He did not save himself. He was well educated, a writer of Latin verse, and an astute critic, whose proposals for the advancement of the Church brought success when followed and regret when neglected.¹⁷ When he visited Vincennes in 1806, 1808 and 1810, he came as Carroll's Vicar General, the chief missionary of the West, who felt in his missionary's heart real sorrow for the neglected village. His criticisms, though hard, were what he thought the Bishop should hear.

His companion on this journey, Father Charles Nerinckx, was likewise an exile from the political turmoil of Europe. He was a native of what is now Belgium, coming to this country in 1804.¹⁸ He was assigned to Kentucky by Carroll, and it was amidst his activities in that State that he made the trip with

16 Shea, *Life of John Carroll*, p. 409.

17 M. J. Spalding, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky*, Louisville, *passim*.

18 Camillus, P. Maes, *The Life of Charles Nerinckx*, Cincinnati, 1880.

Badin to Vincennes. Like Badin he was of stern stuff. He labored long and zealously, and offered no compromise to the easy-going. His observations, like those of Badin, were too severe rather than too lenient.

On his first visit in April, 1806, Father Badin was so shocked that he excused himself from the duties of the mission, leaving them for his companion, Father Nerinckx, who baptized twenty-eight persons, including one American named Hall. That Nerinckx was not more favorably impressed was shown by the letter he wrote Carroll the following June:

We found them like unto sheep astray and almost perishing; their total destruction seems certain unless a helping hand be extended to them. They are a very bad people fallen into many vices of sensuality and perjury, unmindful of the commandments of the church with regard to the observance of the feasts, of fasts and abstinence; in a word there is 'neither beauty nor comeliness but destruction and unhappiness are in their ways'. I think there are about eighty families at the Post, but many more are scattered in the neighborhood. They desire very much to have a priest who would help them in their distress, although I am afraid they will not listen to him. They are a lazy, voluptuous set, and the position of a priest among them will necessarily be trying, desolate and sad.¹⁹

Nerinckx added that Governor Harrison, also interested in securing a resident priest for Vincennes, offered his help to secure the \$200, which Rivet had received each year. Stern Nerinckx opposed such an arrangement, as hampering the freedom of religion, but did urge Carroll to send a missionary.

Although neither Father Badin nor Nerinckx remained long at Vincennes, they did much for the neglected mission by their appeals and letters to the Bishop of Baltimore. Nerinckx during his visit undoubtedly did what he could to awaken the people from their lethargy. Badin thought also of the Americans, and we find in the *Vincennes Sun* of 1807, running for several

19 Nerinckx to Carroll, June 2, 1806, CHR, VI (1920), pp. 76-82.

months, an advertisement of a little book on *The Real Principles of Roman Catholics In Reference to God and the Country*.²⁰ Badin had prepared this booklet for his missions in Kentucky, and found it useful for the English-speaking people of Vincennes. In its 114 pages he set forth the basic principles of the Catholic faith, devoting only 19 pages to them. In the other 95 pages he proceeded to support these principles against the most common objections he met on the frontier. Particularly interesting is his explanation that the Pope is infallible only in connection with an eucumenical council. Whether this Gallican doctrine was one which Badin had received in his early training in France, or was taken from another work on which *The Real Principles* was based, we do not know. We find no other trace of it in his writings, and the doctrine was not declared an article of faith in the Catholic Church until after his death. This book, however, is more significant as an early example of Badin's opinion that American Catholics should publish more expositions of their faith in English. He always maintained that many non-Catholics, particularly the editors of newspapers, would gladly use such publications.

It is possible that Badin acquired, at this time, by his contacts with the Indians the interest in them that led to his return to the Indian missions twenty years later. He wrote of his experiences during May, 1808, to Carroll:

I lodged at Governor Harrison's, who would have me visit some distant nations of savages, among whom has arisen a certain prophet inimical to the U. S. The partiality of the savage for the French and for Priests induced him to make the proposal; my wish to be useful to the country and to instruct those benighted people would have made me obey the request, if I had been invested with

²⁰ Badin, who prepared the booklet from an English booklet of the same title, signed it "by a French clergyman". Printed by F. Peniston, Bardstown, Ky., 1805. Cf. Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., *Early Catholic Americana, 1729-1830*, New York, 1939, which states, p. 62, that the original booklet published in England was written by a Benedictine, James Corker. Spalding, *Sketches of Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky* relates the story of Badin's writing this booklet, p. 125.

a canonical mission, and if assisted with a cooperator. It is afflicting, indeed, to see that Quakers, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc., have crept in and established their errors among tribes once taught the true religion by the Jesuits. I have given some talks by interpreter to those I met with at Vincennes, and especially at the grave of a Kickapoe chief, baptized on the day of his death. The Governor gave him the honors of war, as we those of religion, and his warriors, impressed with a sense of gratitude, friendship and religion, intended to transmit to their brethren the news of the honors rendered by their Fathers Les Robes Noires to those who have been baptized.²¹

Perhaps these lines explain why Harrison had been so anxious, two years before, to obtain government subsidy for a successor to Rivet. In 1806, the Prophet, Tenskwautawau,²² the brother of Tecumseh, was just beginning to rally around himself members of various Indian tribes to drive away the encroaching white frontiersmen. He claimed a divine mission to tell them to give up whiskey and fighting and to unite against the whites. By 1808, the time of which Father Badin wrote, the Prophet had established himself on the upper Wabash and was threatening to move nearer Vincennes. Harrison was alarmed and thought Badin, as a French priest, might be able to undermine the influence of this fanatical red man. Two months after Badin's visit the Prophet came to Vincennes to assure Harrison of his pacific intentions; but when Tecumseh visited Vincennes, two years later, the pacific intentions had given way to an announced intention to stop the encroachments of the whites by a combination of all the tribes, the holding of all the Indian lands in common, and the refusal to sell to the whites. Within two years the final outbreak of Indian warfare spread terror along the Wabash.

21 Badin to Carroll, June 15, 1808, 119, AAB.

22 Dawson, *Harrison*, pp. 105-111; Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of his brother the Prophet* with an historical sketch of the Shawanoe Indians, Cincinnati, 1841, pp. 89-109; Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago and the Old Northwest, 1673-1835*, Chicago (1913), pp. 178-194.

During the years preceding the War of 1812 the Indians were the chief concern of the government in the Northwest. This handling of the Indians was likewise important to those citizens of Vincennes who continued to engage in the fur trade; for at the termination of the earlier Indian wars the fur trade of the Wabash Valley revived,²³ although it never became what it had been. The government, having gone into the trade to overcome some of its evils, had established a post at Fort Wayne²⁴ in which tremendous quantities of fur and pelts were bought up and shipped to Philadelphia and New York markets. But, despite the entrance of the government into the fur trade, there were still merchants at Vincennes, Fort Wayne and other towns who made money. The three leaders of Vincennes were Francis Vigo, who had served the United States without reward in the Revolution; Laurient Bazadone, the Spanish merchant; and the French house of Hyacinthe Lasselle. Their headquarters were important buildings in the town. The storehouse of Bazadone was built of hewed logs two stories in height with portholes for muskets in case of attack. In the cellars were stocks of merchandise, bottles and casks of wine. The traders gave to the Indian salt, blankets, whiskey, iron kettles, hatchets, knives, and even trinkets for his furs, and kept stocks of these things in their warehouses.²⁵ Some idea of the amount of business transacted by these men in the better days may be gained from the Lasselle papers. One summary of the trade in 1803 lists the total value of the furs sold by the firm as 3,595 livres.²⁶

The fur trade was at first one of Harrison's greatest problems. He had to be on his guard to see that these traders ob-

23 Charles B. Lasselle, "The Old Indian Traders of Indiana", IMH, II, pp. 1-13.

24 Bert J. Griswold, ed., *Fort Wayne, Gateway of the Northwest, 1802-13*, Indianapolis, 1927, pp. 23-5.

25 Lee Burns, "Life in Old Vincennes," IHSP, VIII (1929), p. 441.

26 Récapitulation des pelleteries recu de Mons. Hyacinthe Lasselle en 1803, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

served the governmental regulations, particularly concerning trade in liquors. With the new migrations, however, he had to be concerned with the attempts of the Indians to drive away the permanent settler who wanted not the Indians' furs but their lands. There had been desultory fighting and occasional murders in the first decade of the century, and, then, the Prophet and Tecumseh began to rally the tribes in the hope of saving their country from further encroachments. The Indians of the Vincennes region, at this time, were chiefly the remnants of the Mascoutens and Piankeshaws. Some of the Kickapoos resided west of the Wabash above Tippecanoe. The Delaware remnants were on the eastern branch of the White River, and the Miami along the upper Wabash. The remnants of the Shawnees had congregated on the banks of the Tippecanoe near the site of old Ouiatenon. The Potawatomi were scattered in groups throughout the northern part of the state, particularly on the St. Joseph and Kankakee Rivers. There were small groups of Hurons, and Eel River and Ouias, Miami by origin, near the confluence of the Wabash and Eel Rivers. The sad state of the majority of these Indians under the influence of the traders' whiskey and brandy had been well described by Rivet.

As Harrison soon realized, the wiser chiefs not only sought to keep liquor from their warriors, but blamed the Americans for their corruption. Therefore, Tecumseh and the Prophet preached temperance as the necessary preparation for stopping the encroachments of the white man.²⁷ Their chief complaint was against the recent treaty of Fort Wayne in 1809 in which Harrison had obtained large concessions of land along the Wabash above Vincennes.²⁸

Harrison watched carefully the signs of Indian activity and hostility. In 1810²⁹ he sent Toussaint Dubois of Vincennes

²⁷ Henry Adams, *History of the United States*, 9 v., New York, 1890, VI, pp. 66-112; Esarey, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-202.

²⁸ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, 2 v., Washington, 1904. Senate Document No. 319, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 101-7.

²⁹ Draper Papers on Tecumseh, 25s46-7, WSHS; Toussaint Dubois' Mis-

to find out what the Indians were doing. Dubois learned that they were collecting arms, although professedly not against the Americans. Tecumseh and his chiefs visited Vincennes in August of the same year to denounce the Treaty of Fort Wayne. The Americans became alarmed, and Harrison felt it necessary to lead an armed force into the upper Wabash. There resulted the battle of Tippecanoe, November 6, 1811.³⁰ The Indian power was broken and the subsequent campaigns of the War of 1812, in which Tecumseh allied himself with the British forces, led to the end of the Indian domination of northern Indiana, and the removal of the threat of Indian depredations.

How much the Prophet changed the religious notions of the Indians is difficult to estimate. There is no indication that Indians who had become Christian gave up their faith. The Indian wars, however, and the War of 1812 cut off the Indians from the work of the missionaries.³¹ Badin and Olivier had made some efforts among the Wabash tribes, and it is doubtful whether in the time of peace more could have been done with the few available missionaries.

As the warfare of the years 1810-1812 and the destruction of the Indian power mark a definite point in the social and political history of the state, so these years mark an important change in the history of the Church in Indiana. In 1808 the Catholic Church in the United States had become too extensive to be handled properly from the one see of Baltimore, and the new dioceses of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown were erected. Bardstown comprised "the States of Kentucky and Tennessee and until otherwise provided by this Apostolic see, the territories northwest of the Ohio and extending to the Great Lakes and which lie between them and the diocese of Canada, and extending along them to the boundary

sion to Prophet, 1810, Draper Papers, 25s77-8, WSHS; Esarey, *op. cit.*, p. 184; James B. Finley, *Life Among the Indians*, Cincinnati, 1857, pp. 188-208.

30 Esarey, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-202.

31 Flaget to M. Chanut, Jan. 30, 1815, StMSA.

of Pennsylvania.”³² As an episcopal see, Bardstown brought to Indiana a closer source of missionary aid. The new bishop who was consecrated in 1810, Benedict Joseph Flaget, a former pastor of Vincennes, gave added hope to this neglected mission. There were, however, other Catholics in the state besides the French, seeking, among the American pioneers, new homes in the West.

The vast majority of these Indiana immigrants, especially those from the southern states, were Protestant.³³ In their new homes some never became affiliated with any church, but the majority came under the sway of the great religious organizations of the frontier, the Baptists and Methodists, with their circuit-riding preachers and self-educated leaders. There were numerous Presbyterians, chiefly among the better educated, but the insistence by the Presbyterian synods on a trained clergy did not permit that religious group to care for its scattered membership on the frontier. The presence of Catholics, especially in Kentucky, was recognized by the choice of Bardstown as the first western Catholic see. From the Bardstown group, as well as from the Carolinas and Virginia, Catholic settlers were finding their way across the Ohio and settling on the northern bank of that river and along the White and Wabash rivers. For many years, however, Vincennes remained the only functioning center of Catholicism within the State. The faithful among the French hoped that one day they would again have a resident priest, who could in turn look to the care of the other scattered Catholics.

The new bishop of the West was not to find it easy to care for these long neglected French missions. The fact that Bardstown, and not Vincennes, became the first Catholic episcopate of the West had its own significance for Indiana's Catholics. The permanent church organization of the Middle West was to be American in origin and spirit. The Catholic groups that Bishop Carroll sought to take care of, first through Father

³² Shea, *Life of John Carroll*, pp. 621-2.

³³ Esarey, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

Stephen Badin and his co-workers, and, then, Bishop Flaget and his priests, were for the most part from Maryland, the first home of the Catholic Church in the English colonies.³⁴ They had settled mostly in Nelson County, and had then spread throughout Kentucky and Tennessee, and thence across the Ohio. As a matter of fact, Catholics of the territory north of the Ohio were given to Flaget more as wards than as a part of his diocese.

In his early letters Flaget does not speak much of Indiana or Illinois. His chief concern was Kentucky and Tennessee, and the needs there were so great that he might well have concentrated his small corps on taking care of the families scattered in those states alone.³⁵ Vincennes and the other missions of Indiana and Illinois had to yield their claims of priority to the accepted policy of the American hierarchy. At no time, perhaps, during the nineteenth century did the American bishops have enough priests to care properly for the Catholic population. They had to choose the sites of their missions according to a definite policy. That policy was to take care of the scattered and known Catholics first, offering at the same time, where convenient, the mission of the Church to their non-Catholic neighbors and to others outside the settlements. Conversion of Americans, white or red, may have been a hope but not a direct purpose of these early bishops. Individuals occasionally had other ideas. Probably the most important exceptions to this rule were some of the exiles of the French Revolution such as Badin, Richard, Matignon and Cheverus, who had been trained in Catholic countries where the prestige of the Catholic clergy was taken for granted, and who were unaccustomed to the apology the English-speaking Protestant expected of Catholics. These distinguished French clergymen presumed a common ground with non-Catholics and treated them rather as erring brothers. But whatever may have been Flaget's exper-

34 Mss. Genealogical studies of Spalding, Wathen, Hite and Clements Families by Joseph E. Johnson, D.D.S., of Louisville.

35 Flaget to Father Tessier, July 5, 1813, StSMA. Flaget lists his clergy.

ience in Europe, as Bishop of Bardstown, he had to adopt the practice of American bishops, and serve first those already Catholic in his vast diocese. Consequently, he cared first for his own children within his proper diocese, then those under his wardship, and finally those not yet of the faith. At the beginning of his episcopate the troubles of the War of 1812 prevented the Bishop from making his first visit to Indiana until 1814.

At last on September 18, 1813, Flaget addressed a pastoral to the faithful of Vincennes and of the Illinois. He had heard of the calamities that had befallen those communities by reason of the wars and the recent floods, and he felt that he would be wanting in his duties as chief pastor if he did not speak to them words of consolation. They had attributed their sufferings to a thousand causes, but he warned them that these afflictions were rather the just punishment of God for their sins. Quoting from a letter of St. Cyprian to the people of his time, containing the same idea of divine retribution, he called attention to the growth of impiety and irreligion in these western settlements in recent years. If they desired a return to better days they should "do violence to heaven" by a general reformation of morals, establish peace in their own hearts by repressing their criminal passions, and cause to shine in their lives the virtues of the first Christians. To Olivier, their pastor, he announced in this pastoral that he would make his first visitation to Vincennes after Easter of the following year.³⁶

The French of old Vincennes were excited to learn that, after two years of waiting, their old friend, their former pastor now a bishop, was coming to visit them. The trustees held a meeting and arranged to have the church repaired. Jean Baptiste Villeneuve³⁷ was hired to patch the roof. Father Olivier came from Prairie de Rocher to instruct the people on the preparations for the episcopal visitation and to prepare the candidates

³⁶ Olivier to the Bishop of Quebec, Dec. 12, 1813, AAQ. Contains the pastoral of Flaget.

³⁷ Accounts of the church of St. Francis, 1813-14. Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

for confirmation. For several weeks the parishioners to whom Flaget had always been most dear planned a triumphant entrance for him. At the outskirts of the village Father Olivier³⁸ and his acolytes were to await with a canopy borne by chosen men, and all the villagers were to join in the welcome. Then young men on horseback were sent out some days ahead to meet the bishop, but he had been detained by some unexpected business and did not arrive on time. At last, as the vigil of Pentecost, May 28, came, and there was no sign or word of their visitor, the youths who had been sent ahead became discouraged and returned to tell the disappointed people that he was not coming. Scarcely fifteen minutes behind them, Flaget rode alone, and just after sunset, when the villagers had retired to their houses, he returned after nineteen years absence to his old pastorate of Vincennes.³⁹

The bishop went first to the church to offer thanksgiving for his safe journey and then went to greet the old faithful missionary. Someone saw him greet Father Olivier and rushed to ring the church bell to announce the arrival. Flaget himself tells the story to his brothers:⁴⁰

At the signal every house emptied itself, children who had never seen me, but who had heard me spoken of by their parents rushed towards the presbytery. The young men who had made their first communion under me, or whom I had baptized, came with an excess of orderliness but not with less ardor. The young girls, and the women carrying their children disputed among themselves as to whom had seen me first. The old men themselves, bent under the weight of years, and supported by long sticks hastened more carefully to have the pleasure of seeing once more in this world, as they said, their "little priest", for so they had named me when I was among them. In a moment I found myself in the midst of all my parishioners. 'Ah, it is indeed he,' they shouted from every-

38 Spalding, *Flaget*, pp. 129 ff.

39 J. B. David to Bruté, August 30, 1814, quoting Flaget's letters to David. *Ave Maria*, V, pp. 548-9.

40 Flaget to his brothers, Jour de St. Pierre, 1814, Transcript in StMSA.

where. 'Look at those eyes, it is true they are a little more sunken, but the forehead, those dark eyes, and that hair, without doubt it is a little grey. But it is cut the same.' 'I find him a little fatter than when he was with us,' said others, 'but at the sound of his voice alone I would have recognized him.'

After these first effusions of their heart they got on their knees to ask my blessing, which I gave with a full heart. Not at all content with that general blessing each one of them wanted to receive a particular blessing. What was not their surprise, when, in my turn, seeing them in detail I applied their names and even their first names to their faces. And, that which most astonished them and drew their admiration, was that combining the characteristics of those I knew I found them in the children whom I had never seen, telling of them without mistake to what family they belonged. That scene continued on into the night, but it was so vivid and so tender that the time seemed to me very short.

But to Bishop David,⁴¹ his co-worker at Bardstown, he added sadly: "I found them as I had anticipated, without religion, without yoke, etc. They have not as yet lost the faith, and a zealous priest in their midst would bring them back without any trouble. 'Oh, very dear Father,' they will sometimes say, 'if you could only remain with us a year, we would follow you like lambs, young and old, great and small, etc. etc.' I really believe they are sincere, and a prudent zeal would make regular saints of them."

The next day Flaget in company with Olivier and the members of the congregation paid a visit to the grave of Father Rivet and recited over it the ritual prayers of the Church. Then he entered into the temporal affairs of the congregation, the land which he and Father Rivet had acquired, and the arrangements with the trustees for handling the affairs of the church. But his chief occupation was the instruction of the faithful.⁴² The French came in large numbers to hear him

⁴¹ David to Bruté, *Ave Maria*, V, p. 549.

⁴² Spalding, *Flaget*. Spalding followed Flaget's Journals here. These Journals have all been lost except the one in the UNDA which contains nothing about Indiana.

preach, and many wept at the sound of his voice, recalling as it did the memories of earlier days. He visited them in their homes and was graciously and devotedly received. But the wise prelate saw that not nearly all who came to church, or received him in their homes, were ready to return to the ways of the Church. The old problems of marriage before a civil magistrate and the excessive dancing were still prominent, and he attacked them in his sermons. Some of the older parishioners, weakening under the flood of old memories, returned to the sacraments after an absence of years. The Bishop and Olivier continued their instructions on confirmation, but refused that sacrament to those who did not receive at the same time holy communion. On June 5, he administered confirmation to eighty-six persons. On the same day more than a hundred received communion. The next Thursday and the following Sunday new groups received confirmation—seventy-eight on Sunday. There was more work to be done in the village, but soon Flaget had to go on to the other missions. Later in the fall he passed through Vincennes again and spent another two weeks with these neglected people, confirming during this time forty more.

Flaget was torn between two emotions during his visits to Vincennes. His heart was filled with sorrow at the sight of the "horrible ravages" ⁴³ which impiety and immorality had made during the nineteen years since he had left the country. "Twenty years more without priests and they will have forgotten even the sign of the cross." To David he wrote, on the other hand: "I have found more faith among the poor Frenchmen than I had expected. Zealous and holy priests would reap a hundred fold the fruit we obtain in our own field of labor. How glad they are to hear us." In his report to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda the next year he estimated that

⁴³ Flaget to Duclaux, June 27, 1814. Archives of St. Sulpice, Paris transcript in StMSA.

there were 130 Catholic families in the settlement and that these would be increased if he had a resident priest there.⁴⁴

Flaget also took notice of the Americans at the settlement. Seldom did the American villagers, Catholic or Protestant hear sermons in their own tongue, and to their delight Flaget spoke in English as well as French when he confirmed. There was apparently no strained feeling between religious groups, and the non-Catholics came in large numbers to the Catholic services.⁴⁵ Two days after his arrival, a troop of rangers, setting out for the war in the north, begged his blessing and all knelt, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to receive his benediction.⁴⁶ The Americans begged him to give them English sermons. "They are filled with the best disposition. Nothing would be easier than to baptize and educate their children in the Catholic religion, and lead back a great number of the adults to their old faith—their falling off from which they completely ignore." Flaget had no priest to give to Vincennes. Indeed, when he had visited the great field of missionary endeavor of Olivier he decided that that gentleman could no longer spare the time from his other labors to visit Vincennes, and so he sent word to Father Guy Ignatius Chabrat⁴⁷ that, hereafter, he would have to take Olivier's place and visit Vincennes twice a year. Chabrat, however, was unable to meet Flaget at Vincennes as Flaget had planned. He made his first entries on the baptismal register the following April.

This Father Guy Ignatius Chabrat, a native of Chambre in France, had come to Kentucky in 1810 and the following year at Bardstown became the first priest ordained in the United States west of the Alleghany Mountains. For two years he had been a travelling missionary under Flaget in Kentucky.

44 Flaget to Propaganda, Archives de Propaganda, vol. 3, fol. 323-6, tr. by O'Daniel in CHR, I (1916), p. 317.

45 Flaget to David in David to Bruté, Oct. 10, 1814, *Ave Maria*, V, pp. 561-3.

46 Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 130.

47 Flaget to David, *Ave Maria*, V, 561-3.

A very earnest priest, Chabrat does not seem to have had an attractive personality. He is mentioned by some as hasty and impulsive. He did not get along so well with the trustees at Vincennes. His sermons in French, or imperfect English, were long, sometimes lasting two hours. If one may judge by the lack of correspondence, he had few friends outside of Bardstown, although in his letters to Lasselle he sends his affectionate regards to the more prominent members of the parish. His pastorate at Vincennes does not seem outstanding in any particular. His first visit lasted from April 16 to May 7, 1815, and he performed in that time eighteen baptisms. Before Chabrat's second visit Flaget found it necessary to write to Toussaint Dubois⁴⁸ and the other trustees instructing them to repair the church and demanding from the parish support for one or two priests, saying that volunteer contributions from the people of Vincennes would never suffice. Many people of Kentucky, he wrote, had spoken to him of going to Vincennes, but asked first assurance that there would be a priest there. Flaget instructed Dubois that Chabrat would be at Louisville on September 10 and that someone was to be sent to meet him there and accompany him to Vincennes. Besides insisting that the church and house be repaired, Flaget asked that arrangement be made to take care of Chabrat's lodging and of his horse.

Chabrat remained at Vincennes until October. The next year he came again in April and remained a month. The following year, 1817, he came April 27 and remained until May 26. Shortly after this he retired to France for his health, and did not return to Vincennes as pastor until 1822. But in the interim the parish of Vincennes was visited by many other famous missionaries.

Accompanying Father Chabrat to Vincennes in 1817 came Father Joseph Rosati of the Congregation of the Mission. These Vincentians, or Lazarists,⁴⁹ as that Congregation is called

48 Flaget to Dubois, June 17, 1815, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

49 *Life of the Very Rev. Felix de Andreis, C.M.*, chiefly from Sketches by the Rev. Joseph Rosati, St. Louis (1900), pp. 91-145; *Memoria and Vita* of

in this country, under the direction of the saintly Father Felix De Andreis, had come from Italy the previous year at the request of Bishop DuBourg. While on their way to St. Louis, the intended scene of their labors, they had spent the winter at Bardstown, studying English and assisting in the missions attended from St. Thomas Seminary. The Vincentians are a Congregation of priests engaged in mission work. They have generally devoted themselves to difficult tasks, to the conduct of seminaries and schools, and especially to the care of missions in difficult places. They came to St. Louis at a time when the need of priests was very great. Their unusual zeal, added to a rapid growth in their membership, made them the chief missionaries of the Mississippi Valley in the early nineteenth century. Their names are on the early baptismal registers from Chicago to New Orleans and from Vincennes to Galveston, Texas.

Chief among these devoted priests, after their American founder, was Father Rosati who later became Bishop of St. Louis. His progress in learning English and his missionary experience were so valuable that he was sent with Chabrat to Vincennes. While Chabrat preached and catechized in English, Rosati contented himself with speaking in French. In the April issue of the *Vincennes Western Sun*, the following announcement was inserted:

The citizens of Vincennes are respectfully informed that the Rev. Guy T. Chabrat and the Rev. T. Rosatti have just arrived from Bardstown to perform Divine Service every Sunday in the Church of St. Francis until the 27th of May next. One of the Rev. gentlemen will deliver a sermon in English, every Sunday at two o'clock in the afternoon.⁵⁰

Besides preaching and visiting the people, the two missionaries prepared fifty-two children for their first communion. Rosati

Bishop Rosati. Copy in the Souvay Collection, Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, Original in the Archives of the Procurator General of the Congregation of the Mission, Rome.

⁵⁰ Vincennes, *Western Sun*, April 26, 1817, VIII, no. 21, p. 3.

had the experience of converting an old Indian chief during the visit but his name appears on the baptismal register only on May 26. Subsequently other members of his community were to assist at Vincennes and he himself kept up an active interest in it.

The following year, Bishop Flaget, returning from St. Louis, and Father Stephen Theodore Badin, arrived in Vincennes on January 27 and remained for two weeks. Father Badin performed in this time 25 baptisms. Besides preaching to his French congregation and to the Americans in the church, the great missionary announced through the *Western Sun* of January 31⁵¹ that he would preach in the Court House at 2 o'clock, and on the following Sunday he preached in English in the "Seminary." The bishop and his companion then departed for Louisville and Bardstown. In April, 1818 Father John Baptist Acquaroni,⁵² another Vincentian, on his way to join Bishop DuBourg at St. Louis, visited Vincennes and performed between April 12 and April 19 four baptisms. At last in June Vincennes saw once more the arrival of a resident pastor in the person of Father Anthony Blanc.

During these years of neglect Vincennes itself had been undergoing many changes. The principal change was the influx of Americans. The census of 1820 gives to Knox County about 5,000 inhabitants. Of these there could hardly have been more than 1000 descendants of the old French families, although the town itself remained completely French in character until the movement to the old commons after 1820. Among the rest of the population there had, of course, always been some Catholics, since, from Gibault's time, there was a constant small number of baptisms of persons of English and Irish names, and of persons merely listed as American. As Flaget⁵³ pointed out, there would have been more, probably, if the Amer-

⁵¹ *Western Sun*, Jan. 31, 1818, IX, n. 9, p. 3.

⁵² Acquaroni to Lasselle, July 7, 1818, Lasselle Papers, ISLC; *St. Louis Cath. Hist. Review*, III, p. 318, n. 20.

⁵³ Flaget to Dubois, June 17, 1815, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

ican Catholic group which had settled about Bardstown, Kentucky, could have found priests to attend them in the more suitable lands near Vincennes. It was still spoken of as a French village by travelers, although its leading men were seldom French.

In cultural matters, the French no longer took the lead. Their songs and dances, the celebration of feast days, their French ways of dressing continued, but they were ceasing to have cultural influence even on their younger generation. Their representatives in the legislatures were not of their own families, and the judges and other civil officers were Americans. When the Vincennes University was chartered, none of the old French families appeared among the trustees.⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, the chief French tended to be later immigrants from Detroit or Canada such as Hyacinthe Lasselle, and some of the Gamelins, although the Gamelin family had been so long in Vincennes that they were almost part of the old tradition.

The French were far from satisfied with their new position. They felt aggrieved. Apparently they had accepted the second grade of government in the Territory in the belief that their condition would be bettered, and that their old traditions would be safeguarded. In this they felt that they had been deceived, and in the *Western Sun* of August 22, 1807, they announced the resolutions drawn up at a meeting at the home of Madame Page. They first insisted that their representatives oppose the proposed law by which the Vincennes commons would be disposed of in lots. The second resolution reads: "That for some time past the French inhabitants of Vincennes have felt with deep regret and chagrin, that the men to whom they candidly and fully confided their political trusts, have not only failed to realize the promises and assurances which we too credulously relied upon." They had voted for the change of government because they believed the burdens under which they labored, "would not only be alleviated, but almost entirely discontinued." On the contrary, they maintained "these burdens have

⁵⁴ *History of Knox and Daviess Counties*, p. 273.

accumulated and as we too clearly perceive, will continue to increase.”⁵⁵ They then announced the withdrawal of their support of the representatives who promoted the second grade of government. Just what they had expected from the government, they did not say. But we may safely presume that they expected greater protection, perhaps real aid.

To this French group the prosperity of early Vincennes never returned. The government never repaid the loans made by the citizens to the patriot armies. They never received the full value for their Donation Lands. Interesting in this connection are the church accounts in the fragmentary records. The trustees⁵⁶ met once or sometimes twice a year, but even when they found a quorum, which was not often, nothing was accomplished, except a resolution made now and then to repair the church. Hyacinthe Lasselle apparently cared for the finances, as he retained a list of the subscriptions⁵⁷ for the pews. In 1815 he listed 33 benches as being rented, 14 on the gospel side, 8 in the center and 11 on the epistle side. Of the renters he listed only 18 who had paid. In 1816, 24 paid for the benches, a total of \$67.75—not a large sum for the support of a priest and the upkeep of a church for a year. In 1817 he listed 49 burials, for 10 of which something was paid. In 1817 all thirty-three benches apparently were paid for by a total of \$104.20. There are no descriptions of the services in the church during the absence of the priests, but we may readily conclude that they were not heavily attended. There are indications that the three kinds of records kept, those of baptism, marriage and burial, were quite sufficient for a majority of the parishioners.

David Thomas,⁵⁸ the naturalist, visited Vincennes in 1816, and has left us, perhaps, the best statistical information about the old village during the days when it was still the most im-

⁵⁵ *Western Sun*, Aug. 22, 1807, I, no. 8.

⁵⁶ Trustees Minutes, 1814-1824, VPR.

⁵⁷ Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

⁵⁸ David Thomas, *Travels through the Western Country in the Summer of 1816*, Auburn, N. Y., 1819.

portant town in Indiana and Illinois. He noted that the town was seated on a sandy plain resting on gravel, that it seemed extensive because of the large gardens. There was no paving in the streets. The houses were arranged in different squares; and he noted eight brick houses, ninety-three frame houses and one hundred and fifty French houses—exclusive of barns, stables and old uninhabited houses which he estimated at about one hundred and fifty. The French houses were those of older days with their walls of whitewashed posts filled in with mud and straw mortar, and covered with thatched or bark roofs. He saw many abandoned cellars and old chimneys near the town which indicated that it had decreased in size. The church, he described, as sixty-six feet in length, about twenty-two feet wide, and nine feet from the ground to the eaves. It had “a kind of a steeple, about eight feet high with a small bell.”⁵⁹ The academy east of the town, he said, had only a common school, but two large schools had been begun in the town since his visit.

The business activity of Vincennes was what one would expect in a frontier town of such size. Thomas mentioned 18 stores of merchandise, 6 taverns, 4 black-smiths' shops, 2 gun-smiths, 3 shoemakers' shops, 3 saddlers' shops, 4 tailors' shops, 2 cabinet makers, 3 hat factories, 1 silver smith, 1 tin factory, 1 chair maker, 1 tobacconist, 1 tannery, 1 apothecary, 2 printing offices, 1 limner, and 7 physicians. Besides these there were in the village, a chapel, the academy, a post office, a bank, a government land office, a court house, a jail, two market houses and a livery stable. The amount of merchandise in Vincennes in 1816 was estimated at one hundred thousand dollars. The merchants procured their goods from New Orleans by way of Louisville, although their beer and porter came from Cincinnati.

The French retained their Canadian patois, their customs, their folk lore, and even their dress for many years after the advent of the American immigrants. A just estimate of their

⁵⁹ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

culture in this later period is hard to obtain. They certainly did not compare favorably with the better class of American settlers, and to the well educated English traveler ⁶⁰ they made practically no appeal at all. Their indolence, while exaggerated by some travelers, was real. Their poverty had very little relation to their gaiety and love of amusement, a fact which their American and English critics failed to understand. Some of them, having been so often without the ministrations of the priests, may have depended too long on a final repentance and sacramental restoration, but few ceased to consider themselves Catholics. Their philosophy of life, while not wealth-producing, brought into their homes laughter and a measure of quiet peace.⁶¹ And no matter how poor may have become their observance of their religious duties, the spark of faith was always there to be rekindled. In them generosity and hospitality, seldom absent on the frontier, were combined with a strict closeness in monetary gifts or expenditures. And nowhere was this thriftiness more clearly manifest than in the unsuccessful efforts of the missionaries to secure from them steady financial means for themselves and their churches. Such in general were the remnants of the old French settlements which were to serve as the foundation stones of the present day Catholic Church in Indiana. The new pastors were to find building on such foundations a difficult undertaking.

⁶⁰ Adlard Welby, in XII, pp. 236-40, and W. Faux, in XI, pp. 207-19, *Early Western Travels*, ed. by Thwaites.

⁶¹ John Reynolds, *My Own Times*, p. 64, and *Pioneer History*, pp. 54-5.

CHAPTER V

BISHOP DUBOURG SENDS AID

BISHOP FLAGET OF BARDSTOWN found his diocese too large to permit even occasional visitations. Detroit with its schisms claimed his attention in 1818,¹ and, while there, he went to Canada to compare his episcopal problems with those of his neighbor. From Detroit the zealous Father Richard was endeavoring vainly to care for most of the southern Michigan peninsula. The whole of northern Indiana, including the Indians who were constantly begging Flaget for a priest,² was without even occasional visits. Olivier alone strove to care for the scattered stations of Illinois. Flaget's real diocese of Kentucky and Tennessee was enough for one man's energy, hampered as he was by the lack of priests. So serious was the situation that Bishop William DuBourg of Louisiana, coming from Europe with a band of missionaries for his own diocese, agreed to give Flaget a helping hand. Two priests, Philip Janvier and John Bertrand³ were loaned to the diocese to assist Father Richard in Detroit. Two other Fathers, Anthony Blanc and Augustus Jeanjean, were sent to Vincennes.

Early in April, 1818, Father Chabrat, who up to this time had been in charge of the mission, wrote to Hyacinthe Lasselle⁴ instructing him to prepare for the two missionaries. The church was to be repaired, and horses were to be sent to meet the priests at Louisville on their way from Bardstown. Chabrat accompanied the new missionaries, when, finally on June 1, they set out from Bardstown. As neither Blanc nor Jeanjean was proficient in English, Chabrat introduced them to the village and took the opportunity to announce in the *Western Sun*⁵ that

¹ Flaget to Tessier, Dec. 2, 1818, StMSA; Richard to Rosati, Nov. 24, 1823, AASTL.

² *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la foi*, III, p. 202.

³ Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 177.

⁴ Chabrat to Lasselle, April 27, 1818, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

⁵ *Western Sun*, June 13, 1818, IX, no. 8, p. 3.

he would preach in the chapel on Sunday the 14th at 2 o'clock. Blanc became the pastor of the settlement, and we find his first entry on the baptismal register for June 11, 1818. Father Jeanjean's chief work was to establish the long desired and much needed school.

Father Anthony Blanc,⁶ a native of Sury in the south of France, had answered Bishop DuBourg's appeal for missionaries. Well-educated, strong-willed and earnest, he made a forceful frontier missionary, and later a successful bishop in New Orleans. Old residents of Vincennes later recalled him as tall and slender, with a charming good nature that made him a favorite with the congregation, much as Flaget had been in his pastorate. He visited his parishioners, bringing to each an understanding that charmed and encouraged them; in turn they frequently visited him in his house on Sundays and holidays after the vespers. He entered into his work with a cheerful spirit, and the ignorance and stubbornness of the people amused rather than irritated him.

Blanc's companion, Augustus Jeanjean,⁷ likewise, a native of southern France, looked on life with an even less serious mien. He was small and compactly built. His voice was strong and clear, but his knowledge of English was so slight that at first, like Blanc, he would preach only in French. His purpose in coming to Vincennes was to establish a "college," which in those frontier days might mean anything above a primary school. Chabrat announced it as an institution for the "sciences, French, Latin, geography and, in a little time, English."⁸ Jeanjean had, besides a good voice, some talent in music and, while training a choir for the church services, he also offered courses in music. His "college," however, never prospered. Spalding, who had the Flaget "Journals" says that a "Vincennes faction" (although just what was meant by this no one today

6 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 137-9; *St. Louis Cath. Hist. Review*, III, p. 324, n. 48.

7 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 139-40.

8 Chabrat to Lasselle, April 27, 1818, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

seems to know) opposed the setting up of this college; and when the news of this reached Bishop DuBourg he sent word to Jeanjean to come to New Orleans. After Jeanjean left Vincennes he served in many capacities, principally in New Orleans, at one time refusing the nomination to the bishopric, but for many years acting as Vicar General. While he was at Vincennes, besides directing the choir and assisting in the ordinary parochial functions, he also visited the new missions in the vicinity.

Writing on September 10, 1818,⁹ to Father Rosati, Jeanjean playfully used the *patois* of the Vincennes habitants in describing the poor health of the town that summer. Extreme heat with sudden rains and smothering nights had given rise to innumerable fevers which spread over the whole town. Three, four or five persons were sick in nearly every home. Neither he nor Blanc, however, had caught the fevers, and had had little to do as the people did not move about. He added that the neighborhood was for him a confusing babel of languages. His own French from France he heard occasionally, in addition to Canadian French. To these he had been forced to add English, mixed with words borrowed from the savages. Only the Latin seemed familiar, and he added that if the Sacred Congregation of Rites ever adopted the vernacular for its liturgy, he feared he would lose what he knew of that ancient language.

Rosati, on his return from Vincennes, had given Jeanjean favorable reports of the friendliness of the people. For some reason, which Jeanjean could not fathom, the friendliness had changed since the previous year. Good fellowship and interest in religion had almost disappeared. The only thing that remained the same was the habitants' conviction of the need of education for their children. Some of the older residents told him they had been prepared in their religion in Canada, and that unless the children were trained the parishioners would lose their religion. But Jeanjean discovered that their theology consisted for the most part of a belief in God and the Blessed

⁹ Jeanjean to Rosati, Sept. 10, 1818, AASTL.

Virgin. They were attached to the word religion but not to any of its practices. "They have often more devotion to giving the blessed bread¹⁰ than to assisting at the Mass. . . . As for instruction in the mysteries, the most learned of them do not know the things absolutely necessary for the reception of the sacraments, yet one cannot persuade them of their ignorance."

To Jeanjean especially fell the task of trying to learn English, so as to take care of the Americans outside the town of Vincennes. Among the hundred thousand people who had come into the State by 1818 there were many Catholics. Some of them, neglected for a generation, lost their faith and raised their children in the religious form most available. There were names on the baptismal register even in the times of Father Chabrat's pastorate of those who had died without returning to the Church.¹¹ There were also many families such as the Sullivans and the Spinks of Indianapolis, faithful Catholics as late as 1800, who had turned from the church because of the lack of priests and the absence of religious training.

The obligation to help these scattered Catholics as much as possible fell to Bishop Flaget and his assisting priests. Along the Ohio, Flaget, Badin, Abell, and the Dominicans, Stephen Montgomery and John A. Hill,¹² gave as much time as their regular assignment permitted. Settlers nearer Vincennes fell under the care of Blanc and Jeanjean. On the first Sunday in September, 1819, Jeanjean, after announcing himself to the countryside, went to what is now the country around St. Peter's Church, Montgomery, Indiana where some Catholic families, the Kidwells, Dants and Montgomerys¹³ from Kentucky, the

¹⁰ *pain béni*, blessed bread. Originally this was the bread presented by the people from which the mass bread was taken. Later this custom continued, especially among the French, in the offering of this bread on certain days by the wealthier families to be blessed and distributed to the congregation as a sign of mutual affection, cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, II, p. 750.

¹¹ (Cauthorn), *History of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 134.

¹² Victor F. O'Daniel, *The Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick, O.P.*, New York (1920), pp. 294-5.

¹³ *Indianapolis Catholic Record*, Dec. 19, 1889, VII, p. 25; *History of Knox and Daviess Counties*, p. 729.

vanguard of a larger migration, had settled. To his disappointment the weather was bad, and the rain continued all day. He conducted his services but complained that he did not have a chance to show his wares to the neighboring Methodists, who, he said, were a bit "ignorant in botanical sciences since while they thought a priest was an animal, were not certain to what class of animal he belonged."¹⁴ But there was apparently no animosity in their ignorance, for he had made the appointment a fortnight before and they had indicated a great desire to see and hear him. He preached to them later. According to Blanc, Jeanjean was making considerable progress in English, although he preferred the countryside to the town for his attempts. Just then, Bishop DuBourg, hearing that the efforts to found a college had been thwarted, recalled Jeanjean to Louisiana. Blanc was ordered to prepare to follow him within a few months.¹⁵

Blanc concentrated his efforts more upon the French elements of his congregation, although he could not help expressing affection for the Americans, whose conduct he said, "afforded him so much satisfaction." Like Jeanjean he found some of the French had been well trained, while they were in Canada, especially those who were under the care of the priests of St. Sulpice. Their migration to the United States, however, had been a detriment to their religion. He found that he could not make much headway in arousing their religious spirit. He felt that "the moment marked by Providence is not yet come for the poor people of Vincennes and their pastor."¹⁶

On the River Cat, across the Wabash and some 27 miles northwest he found a French settlement also badly in need of religious instruction, and in a few visits he gave them all the time that he could spare from his work in Vincennes. There were 10 or 20 families in this settlement, of whom Jeanjean remarked that they were the brothers of Vincennes, at least in

14 Jeanjean to Rosati, Sept. 10, 1818, AASTL.

15 Letter of Blanc in the *Annales*, II, p. 343.

16 Blanc to Rosati, Jan. 11, 1819, AASTL.

their ignorance and tardiness. Blanc contented himself with visiting the mission occasionally, saying mass, preaching and teaching catechism to the children. Hearing confessions was not a very important part of this ministry, but Blanc and Jean-jean, in their cheerful manner, would not let their failure to arouse religious fervor discourage them. They were conscious of having done their part, and were hopeful that they would see better days.

Both priests felt deeply their inability to speak fluent English, but found the Americans, both Catholics and non-Catholics, very appreciative. The non-Catholics, deprived of their own ministers, were anxious to hear the word of God. Blanc soon realized that they would listen to him all the day, if he would continue to speak in English. Generally, when the weather was fine, every place in the little church was filled, because the "sects observe scrupulously the Holy Day, and insisted on the cessation of all work." The French were not nearly so faithful to Sunday observance. The non-Catholics listened to the sermons with serious attention, whatever prejudices they may have had against Catholicism. Blanc adds that they likewise showed to the priests even more respect than they showed towards their own ministers. The Rev. Samuel T. Scott,¹⁷ a Presbyterian minister, who lived three miles in the country, came every three weeks to conduct services; other itinerant ministers visited the town, giving sometimes three sermons the same day. Yet, Blanc noted, they never said the slightest thing against the priests.

One day a Baptist clergyman, living in the country about thirty leagues from Vincennes, came to Blanc and told him that he had never listened to the preaching of a Catholic priest. He requested permission to see the church and the cross, announcing, when he saw the latter, that he believed in the mysteries of redemption. He caught sight of Blanc's breviary, took it in his hand and paged through it for some time. Blanc asked

¹⁷ *History of Knox and Daviess Counties*, p. 292.

him if he understood it and he answered "Oh, I am not sufficiently learned (*savant*) for that."¹⁸

For the Catholics in and about St. Peter's Blanc blessed a log chapel in 1819.¹⁹ There were at that time sixteen Catholic families in the neighborhood, although some of them were three leagues from the chapel, and, when the rivers were up, could not attend the services. When the word was sent ahead that the priest was coming, these people, filled with the faith that flourished about Bardstown, would come long distances fasting, and then return tranquilly to their homes at one or two o'clock. Blanc also blessed a little chapel for the French settlement across the river.

Both Blanc and Jeanjean were drawn by the novelty of attending the Indians.²⁰ In this they shared the interest of the Catholics of France of that time, which seems to have been centered more in the Indian missions than in the missions among the whites. The mission societies, seeking financial aid, found that it was easier to get the attention of the people by an appeal to take care of a pagan savage than to take care of the humdrum parish life among neglected settlements of the frontier. The missionaries, however, had to be more practical in their interests. Flaget betrayed impatience when he told the readers of the *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*²¹ that there were no Indians in his diocese proper and that he lacked the priests to take care of the distant tribes. He had all he could do to minister to the whites who were already Catholic. He needed the help of the Association to establish churches and to support the missionaries who had to travel such long distances to care for small groups financially unable to support priests. Besides this obstacle to Indian missions, he noted the fact that the savages were so primitive in their knowledge

18 Letter of Blanc in *Annales*, II, pp. 350-1.

19 Blanc to Rosati, Jan. 11, 1819, AASTL.; *Annales*, II, pp. 343-4.

20 *Annales*, II, pp. 343-50.

21 Flaget to M.D.P., Nov. 1, 1827, *Annales*, III, p. 191; "Etat du diocèse de Bardstown," *Annales*, III, p. 202.

and so given to drunkenness that he did not feel that their conversion could be effected, until they had been drawn apart by themselves, and that, even then, it would be a gradual process.

Blanc and Jeanjean, however, enjoyed their visits among the Indians. When they wore the black soutane the Indians quickly recognized them as "black robes." They baptized in these visits seven Indian children. On the vigil of the Assumption, the French gave a feast for the Indians five miles from the village and invited Jeanjean and Blanc. They went, but excused themselves from the feast because they were fasting in preparation for the morrow's feast. When the savages understood that it was for a good motive, and not because they disdained their food, they were satisfied. Blanc found that the Indians gave every courtesy to the priests, and asked in return only that their courtesies be received, except for one thing. They asked some return in spiritual services. They were spiritually hungry and thirsty for the ministrations of the black robes. But there was a limit to what priests could do. Most of the Indians that Blanc and Jeanjean took care of were those who came into the village to trade. They made no effort to go among those settled in the northern part of the state.

Blanc noted that Vincennes was growing during the years 1816-19:²² fifteen new houses were built, and thirty were planned for the next spring. In the midst of this speculation, however, the citizens had little time or thought for religion. A society had been formed to promote the business interests of the town, at the head of which Judge Benjamin Parke²³ was placed, not so much because of his monetary contribution but because of the prestige of his name. This society maintained a flour mill, operated by steam power, and a bank. It was preparing to charter a boat to run to New Orleans. In addition, it had planned for the construction of a large brick building to serve as a general store, and a bridge across the Wabash a

²² Blanc to Rosati, Jan. 11, 1819, AASTL.

²³ Benjamin Parke, 1777-1835, the first judge of the Circuit Court of the U. S. for the district of Indiana.

little below the house of the Harrisons. Blanc hoped to take advantage of this spirit and build a new church in place of the old neglected one. It had been plastered just before his arrival, but it was not far from "indecent" in its poverty and age. Yet, because of the all consuming interests in business affairs among the people, he had to lay aside his subscription list.

The affairs of the parish took a more orderly turn under the direction of Father Blanc. Not only were schools begun, the choir organized, and catechism classes taught, but the trustees, if we may judge by the registers that remain, took a more active interest in the affairs of the church. The new register called *Livre de checettu et dépenses de la fabrique de l'église de St. Francis Xavier Vincennes* is headed by the name of Baptiste Bonhomme, "Marguiller en charge pour l'anne 1819."²⁴ Pierre Brouillet succeeded him in 1820 and Antoine Regimbal in 1821. In this book were kept records of those who gave the *pain bénit*. The honor of giving this on the chief feasts of the year belonged to the most respected in the parish, and the list gave this honor to J. Baptiste Bonhomme for Easter, Hyacinthe Lasselle for Christmas, Pierre André for Corpus Christi (*fête Dieu*), Pierre Brouillet for the Assumption, and Toussaint Dinot for All Saints. Other entries in this book were for burials, marriages, renting of the benches—now increased to 34—and for the cost for wines and other expenditures.

In November, 1819,²⁵ Vincennes was favored by another visit from Bishop Flaget, accompanied by Father Robert Abell, just ordained. They had crossed the river at Louisville, visited at New Albany, and proceeded along the Louisville-Vincennes road until they came to the settlements near what is today Washington, Indiana. There the Kentucky Catholics from Union County and Nelson County were beginning to settle. The bishop and his companion attended the congregation there, and, tradition says, gave the first confirmation in these settle-

²⁴ VPR.

²⁵ Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 233; *Western Sun*, Nov. 27, 1819, X, no. 48, p. 3.

ments. They passed on to Vincennes and made the usual episcopal visitation. Neither Flaget nor Abell signed the registers during this visit. Father Abell, being one of the few western missionaries to whom English was native, delighted the Americans with his sermons, one of which was announced for the public in the *Western Sun* of November 27, 1819. From Vincennes the visitors started south on December 6, and passed on by way of Princeton, where they found some Catholics "whose faith was very weak," and thence to Evansville before returning to Kentucky. During the previous year, when Flaget had gone to Detroit to attend to the affairs of the church of St. Anne and to settle a threatened schism, he had attended the treaty sessions held with the Indians at St. Mary's Ohio. There he tried to arrange with the government to pay the expenses of a missionary for the Wabash tribes.²⁶ The government officials were very kind to him, but the Bishop remarked that all he got out of his efforts was a serious attack of fever which tormented him more than two months. Although there were, undoubtedly, many Catholics scattered throughout the state the only permanent mission center remained at Vincennes.

Some account of the membership of the parish at this time can be compiled from the subscription list²⁷ for the support of the church, which was made in 1820. Subscriptions were not large, but the register indicated that most of the prominent families were represented. In all, there are 114 names on the list. One finds families that had been in Vincennes for many generations such as Brouillete, Boyer, Boneau, Boucher, Dubois, Deloriers, Gamelin, Hounot, LaPlante, Mallet, Richardville, and Tiriaque; but there are a few names definitely not of French origin, such as Patrick Ash, Christian Greater, John Johnson, William Lynch, the widow O'Neill, John Pitcher, Louis Peckham. The list can scarcely contain all the families of the parish, because Blanc, counting those outside the town,

²⁶ Flaget to Tessier, Dec. 2, 1818, StMSA.

²⁷ *Livre de la souscription pour l'an 1820*, VPR.

but under his care, claimed 1300 French parishioners²⁸ in addition to the Americans who belonged to the congregation. All loved their Father Blanc, and when Bishop DuBourg called him to Louisiana they wrote in protest. But DuBourg had other plans in his own diocese for this very capable worker and he told them²⁹ that, since they had received other missionaries in the persons of Fathers Ferrari and Dahmen, Blanc must be recalled. He had taken as much care of them as if they were of his own diocese, but he could not deprive the diocese which had been specially committed to his care.

The new missionaries were Fathers Andrew Ferrari and Francis Xavier Dahmen of the Society of the Mission. This zealous society had been represented already at Vincennes in the persons of Fathers Rosati and Acquaroni. Within five years, it had spread throughout the Mississippi valley, saving the faith of the neglected missions and making new converts. Unfortunately, the grand story of this society along the banks of the Mississippi has not yet been written. It will be sufficient for us to note that five of its members signed the register at Vincennes during these days of transition. They were Joseph Rosati, the rotund missionary who visited Vincennes with Chabrat and attended the savages near the town, John Baptiste Acquaroni who served Vincennes for a week in 1818, John Timon who visited in 1830, and the two priests who succeeded Blanc and Jeanjean, Ferrari and Dahmen.

Like so many members of their society they came, did their work, and departed, giving little attention to securing the public acclaim their work deserved. Father Andrew Ferrari³⁰ was a native of Port Maurice on the Genovese Riviera. He came with Father Felix de Andreis to America, and, after accompanying that saintly man to Bardstown, he begged him to allow his admission into the Congregation of the Mission. He was sent to replace Father Jeanjean. His health apparently suffered dur-

²⁸ *Annales*, II, p. 341.

²⁹ Dubourg to Ferrari, Jan. 22, 1820, UNDA.

³⁰ *St. Louis Cath. Hist. Review*, III, p. 326, n. 35.

ing his stay at Vincennes, and in October, 1820, he left Vincennes for the Barrens, Missouri, from where he finally went to St. Louis for medical assistance. When the yellow fever epidemic broke out in 1822, despite his poor health, he tried to assist the sick and in so doing lost his own life on November 2, 1822.

Father Francis Xavier Dahmen,³¹ his companion at Vincennes, was born at Duren in Aix-la-Chapelle and had been drafted into the Napoleonic army. He, too, accompanied Father De Andreis to Bardstown and, after being accepted into the Congregation of the Mission, was ordained at St. Louis September 5, 1819. He succeeded Father Blanc at Vincennes on January 25, 1819, and continued to take care of the congregation after the departure of Father Ferrari. But the congregation was unable to support him, and he was recalled by his superiors in November, 1821. Blanc, having occasion to write to Hyacinthe Lasselle³² during Ferrari's pastorate, begged Lasselle to arouse the parishioners to the support of their priest, but to no avail. The problem of support was to remain the great obstacle of the resident pastor at Vincennes.

On November 18, 1821, there appears on the register the name of Father Gabriel Richard, one of the most distinguished priests of the early Middle West. Richard,³³ as missionary at Kaskaskia, had visited Vincennes in the time of Father Rivet, and had been for over twenty years the leader of the Catholics of Detroit. Publisher of the first newspaper of Michigan, *Essai du Michigan*, co-founder of what was to become the University of Michigan, he was also a very diligent pastor and a hard-working missionary. Leaving his assistants in charge of his missions in the north, he went to Chicago to attend the treaty conference of 1821 to obtain government aid for a

31 *St. Louis Cath. Hist. Review*, III, p. 317, n. 17.

32 Blanc to Lasselle, May 6, 1820, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

33 Richard to Duclaux, Jan. 9, 1924; St. Sulpice Archives, Paris, transcript in StMSA; M. Guerin, *Le Martyr de la Charité ou Notice sur M. G. Richard, Missionnaire*, Lille, 1850; Richard to M. *Annales*, III, pp. 336-49.

Catholic missionary on the St. Joseph River. Contrary winds delayed the boat on which he traveled, and the treaty had been concluded and no provision³⁴ for a Catholic missionary was made. Subsequently, a Baptist missionary, Isaac McCoy, received the government appointment as teacher to reside in the special session on the St. Joseph. Richard was disappointed and sent an earnest appeal to the French Society of the Propagation for funds to carry on his work in the absence of government aid. From Chicago, Richard went into the Illinois country to visit the scene of his labors twenty-five years before, and then stopped at Vincennes on his way to Bardstown. His visit became a two weeks stay, however, when he injured himself in a fall from his horse.³⁵ His name appears on the baptismal register on November 18, and in the *Western Sun* of November 24³⁶ he announced that the next day (Sunday) at 3 o'clock he would preach in the church on the article of the creed "I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church." Christians of "every denomination" were invited to attend.

With the departure of Richard and Dahmen the care of the Vincennes missions devolved again upon Father Chabrat who had returned in 1821 from a trip made to France for his health. He does not seem to have resided continually at Vincennes, and the third attempt to have a resident priest had failed. Under the press of his other obligations, Flaget felt unable to care for these northern missions. DuBourg, conferring with him, suggested that bishops be appointed for Vincennes and for St. Louis, the northern part of his own diocese. Flaget did write to Rome shortly after a visit to Dubourg in 1822,³⁷ asking that a bishop be appointed to Detroit, that Illinois be given to the care of the bishop to be established at St. Louis, and that Indiana be placed under the care of the new diocese of Cincinnati. But Rome did not see fit to relieve Flaget of his north-

³⁴ Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, II, p. 200.

³⁵ Guerin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 ff.

³⁶ *Western Sun*, Nov. 24, 1821, XII, no. 43, p. 3.

³⁷ Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 248.

ern burdens. In 1823 he was able for the first time to send a resident priest in the person of Father John Leo Champomier from his own seminary to care for Vincennes.

Father Champomier, as the only resident priest in Indiana, faced a heavy task. In his own village the people, after another period of neglect, had slipped back into indifference; they were ignorant of all save the general forms of their religion, infrequent at the sacraments and unwilling to sacrifice for the support of the church. They were now an unimportant minority in the community, with little wealth and less social position. Pioneers who had forgotten to move on, they were without honor in the second generation on the frontier. Their tenacity in holding to French customs, however admirable from a nationalistic point of view, was detrimental in a country gradually swamped with American migrations. Their dependence upon government in political matters left them helpless when the American democracy failed to understand and care for them. Religiously, this dependence upon authority was less harmful, for there was always the possibility that their Church would be able to come to their assistance. The zeal of Flaget and Rivet had reestablished their faith upon such solid foundations that despite lack of instruction, and the loose life of the frontier, they never really lost it. While their religious state was sad, it was remediable merely by returning to the practice of the faith they had never given up.

Outside Vincennes among the 150,000 immigrants into Indiana there were undoubtedly hundreds of Catholics. Those residing near Cincinnati could go at times to that city to receive the sacraments; others in such places as McKenzie Settlement, later Dover, were attended by the Dominicans³⁸ on their journeys from Kentucky to Ohio. Farther west along the Ohio the missionaries of Kentucky—Badin, Abell, Nerinckx, Durbin and Coomes—crossed over occasionally, or waited upon these Catholics as they came to the nearest Kentucky mission. The most favored groups, however, were those scattered along the old

38 O'Daniel, *Fenwick*, pp. 395-6.

road from Louisville and New Albany to Vincennes, for ordinarily they had the ministrations of Bishop Flaget and his priests in their journeys to and from Vincennes. Blanc has blessed a log church for them in Daviess County. Flaget had found a few Catholics at Princeton. There were others, scattered and neglected in the other villages in southern Indiana. But, for the most part, the new settlers belonged to Methodist, Baptist or Presbyterian groups, with some Friends and Moravians in the eastern counties.

North of Vincennes the former Indian lands of the Wabash contained many traders of French origin, or of mixed French and Indian blood, who professed the Catholic religion. Where these obtained Catholic ministrations, if they did, we do not know. Some undoubtedly came, as did the Indians mentioned so frequently by the missionaries, to Vincennes. Others went to Detroit or were attended by the missionaries at Mackinack,³⁹ where they followed the Indians⁴⁰ to trade. Rev. Isaac McCoy,⁴¹ in his autobiography, tells us that the French and half-breed traders, engagés and guides who lived with the Indians, were all Roman Catholics, and for that reason some objected to their children receiving instruction from the Baptist missionaries. McCoy also mentions meeting three Catholic missionaries at Fort Wayne on Sunday, April 22, 1822. He attended the preaching of the priests and said that the one chosen to speak preached on baptism with insinuations against the Baptists. Later, McCoy had an opportunity to meet the priests at a social gathering and showed them his own friendliness. One of the

39 There was no resident priest at Mackinack, but the post was occasionally visited by the missionaries of Detroit, such as Levadoux and Richard. Levadoux to Carroll, April 15, 1796, 4y4, AAB; Richard to Carroll, Nov. 6, 1799, 7B7 and May 1, 1804, 7C6, AAB.

40 Richard to Carroll, Nov. 6, 1799, 7B7, AAB.

41 Isaac McCoy, *History of the Baptist Indian Missions*, Washington, 1840, p. 133; Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Travels in the Central Portion of the Mississippi Valley*, New York, 1825. Speaks of Canadians at Fort Wayne in 1821, pp. 73-4.

three priests ⁴² was Father Richard, returning to Detroit after his long trip. He was accompanied by Father Francis Badin, brother of the older missionary, and by Father Anthony Ganahl also of Bardstown, who was on his way to take care of the mission on the Raisin River.

On the baptismal registers of St. Mary's Church in Monroe, the successor to the old mission of Rivière au Raisin, Ganahl entered the names of the four children he baptized during their visit to Fort Wayne, the children of Joseph Moriceau and Pierre Lafariere. The god-parents were Francis Comparey [t], Marie Sergeron, Medard Chretien, Ursule Baron, Jacques and Marguerite Robidoux, and Marienne Bobin. Outside of this one visit the northern part of the state was apparently neglected. The Indians of St. Joseph either came to Vincennes, Mackinac, or Detroit for the sacraments at Easter time, or forgot their earlier training entirely. They retained, with few exceptions, only legends of the black robes. Champomier visited some of them in 1826,⁴³ but it was not until the elder Badin returned from France that the Church could be reestablished among them.

From 1820 to 1822 Indiana suffered a series of pestilences that had a paralyzing effect on many towns, including Vincennes. Some, such as Hindoostan, were entirely erased from the map, and a business recession at the same time caused the more progressive citizens to become worried. Evidence of this feeling can be found in letters signed by "Mentor" in the *Western Sun* in February and March 1822.⁴⁴ In one letter he wrote: "More than one third of our dwelling houses are destitute of inhabitants, our population has decreased nearly or quite one half; our real property has suffered a still greater diminution. Buildings that a few years ago rented for 2 or \$300—many can be had for occupying. Business of every kind,

⁴² Richard to Duclaux, Jan., 1824, St. Sulpice Archives, Paris, transcript in StMSA.

⁴³ Champomier to S. T. Badin, *Annales*, III, p. 230.

⁴⁴ *Western Sun*, XIII, no. 3, 7, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, 1822.

has diminished in nearly the same proportion. . . ." Denying that the epidemic was the cause of this situation, "Mentor" commented on the general health of the community. "But if we reflect that Vincennes was settled as early as the year 1734 and, that from that period down to the present time, she has been afflicted but twice with sickness which can with propriety be called epidemical; the first in the year 1815 and the second in 1820; we must at once pronounce that experience proves our claims to the character of a healthy town." Whatever its health may have been, Vincennes could not expect to compete with other towns of the West which were situated on more traveled rivers, or lakes, or directly on the line of western migration. In its earlier day, it had been the central point in the old Wabash and Erie trade, an important place on the principal road to St. Louis from Louisville, and a shipping point for the Wabash produce. The concentration of traffic on the Ohio and the Great Lakes and the building of other roads had changed all this. Indiana suffered from the lack of a suitable lake port and Vincennes, no longer the capital, ceased to be an important depot for western migrations. The efforts of the next missionary, Champomier, to improve the condition of the French in Vincennes was a struggle against the tide.

CHAPTER VI

CHAMPOMIER AND BADIN—BUILDERS

FATHER JOHN LEO CHAMPOMIER, a native of the diocese of Clermont, and the first member of the diocese of Bardstown to become resident pastor of Vincennes, had come from France with Father Chabrat in 1821,¹ while still a seminarian. Of his early life little is known except that he had served as Captain of Hussars in the French army of 1815;² and military discipline seems to have had its effect, for he demanded strict order in his parish, and commanded the trustees like an army officer rather than a mere head of a board of directors. Prior to his coming to this country, he had spent some years in the Seminary of St. Sulpice. He finished his training in St. Thomas Seminary under Bishop John David at Bardstown. He was ordained March 20, 1823, and two months later he was acting as pastor of Vincennes.

The few records of the new pastor and the trustees indicate that the sessions were stormy.³ After a year or so the records end, and, although the meetings of the trustees did not cease, Champomier decided to rule alone. The trustees had been running the neglected parish for generations, and were not ready to be set aside by this young man with his military methods; though Champomier had his way, he had parish critics watching his every step. The priest had become accustomed to grand things, and was unwilling that his flock should lack the accoutrements of a good church and furnishings proper for a Catholic community. He hoped by building a new church and improving the services to raise the social position and ambitions of his parishioners. His poor parish was not willing, and probably not able, to give him what he wanted. Undaunted, he decided to seek help elsewhere.

1 Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 238.

2 *Annales*, III, pp. 218-9.

3 A portion of these records are in the Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

Champomier wrote in 1822, after his first nine months at Vincennes, to Father Stephen Theodore Badin in France.⁴ He turned to Badin as one who would understand his plight and be able to help him, telling the old missionary that he often passed the meal time without a thing to eat. The clothes he had brought from France were in tatters, and he had no means of getting new ones. His presbytery was open to the winds, and he lived in fear that it would soon come tumbling down about him. The church was not a proper lodging for an animal.⁵ Of the people Champomier was not so complainant. The greater part of them had received the sacraments, at least that of penance, although there were some who had not gone to confession for "twenty, forty and even fifty years."

The hardy soldier-priest, in his own words, had "declared war" upon the more shameful forms of vice, even at the risk of his own safety and had had the consolation already of receiving many of the sinners whom he had forced to do public penance. To these accomplishments he had added the instruction of fifty Protestants who had entered the Catholic Church. He had hopes in time of raising up in the village the true Catholic spirit so long absent from these neglected people.

He turned to the Association of the Propagation, which had been founded in 1822 at Lyons, France, for the support of Catholic missions throughout the world. He directed his appeals to Father Badin, the old missionary of Kentucky, who had devoted most of his time since 1818 in France and Rome advocating the cause of the American missions he had come to love. Probably some of the letters published in the *Annales* of the Association were written at the direction of Badin, for he was constantly urging the American missionaries to prepare such letters for publication.

To carry out his plans Champomier, through Badin, called on the French who had common ancestors with these French of

⁴ Champomier to Badin, *Annales*, III, pp. 221-31.

⁵ Champomier to Badin, *Annales*, III, p. 222.

Vincennes. He had sixteen hundred persons who did not know how to read and, yet, had no rosaries with which to pray. To teach them to pray he needed a school, a church, rosaries and other aids of Catholic instruction and prayer. Badin, who had been at Vincennes, could understand the situation, and so Champomier asked him to call upon possible benefactors in France.

Champomier's bishop, Flaget, having at last sent a priest to his old mission, prepared to follow for a visit. He arrived in September, 1823.⁶ While encouraging and directing the newly ordained priest in his work, he regularly found time to preach on Sunday afternoons at 4 o'clock to the people of the town. He also busied himself about the prospects for a Catholic school. Finally in the columns of the *Western Sun*, of October 18, 1823, he ran an announcement of the Academy he proposed to establish in Vincennes. He demanded first that sufficient support be assured to enable him to set the school in operation. In return, he promised:

The ladies who will superintend the Academy will exclusively devote their attention to the improvement of their pupils, in the branches of useful and polite education mentioned. Religious prepossessions or opinions shall never be disturbed or discussed, or touched upon in any way by them.⁷

The "ladies" referred to were members of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, from Bardstown, a community established in 1813 by Bishop David,⁸ which Bishop Flaget had persuaded to come to the assistance of Father Champomier at Vincennes. The following April the Sisters announced through the *Western Sun* that they were ready to open the school on the next Tuesday, April 20.⁹ "*Sister Harriet Gardiner*, the Superior of

6 *Western Sun*, Sept. 6, 1823, XIV, no. 32, p. 3.

7 *Western Sun*, Oct. 18, 1823, XIV, no. 38, p. 3.

8 Anna Blanche McGill, *The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky*, New York (1917).

9 *Western Sun*, April 17, 1824, XV, no. 10, p. 3.

the school, to whom all applications are to be made and by whom all information will be readily given in consideration of the difficulty of the times, cheerfully submits to the very moderate scale of prices announced in a former paper. She laments being deprived of the society and aid of the Sister originally intended to teach music in this school—in consequence of which, pupils intended solely for the *piano*, cannot at this time be received."

Sister Harriet Gardiner, an original member of the Bardstown community, was one of those noble women on whose strong character and deep religious convictions pioneer religious institutions are built. She was the granddaughter of prominent emigrants from Maryland, Clement and Henrietta Gardiner.¹⁰ The traditions of Vincennes give her great honor both for her high character and the quality of her work. Her school, a boarding school, was not largely attended, and its curriculum was not extensive. The subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, history, plain and fancy needlework, marking, lacework, beadwork, drawing, painting in colors, and vocal music.¹¹ But in the void of Vincennes the curriculum offered very superior training.

At the conclusion of the first year's course special visitors from the town of Vincennes were invited to attend the examination in the first three classes, and these visitors, E. McNamee, D. S. Bonner and John Ewing, gave public testimony of their approval in the *Western Sun* of August 28, 1824.¹² To their report they added the following paragraph:

This school, under the immediate direction of a lady so eminently qualified to give to the sex these desirable accomplishments which dignify and adorn their minds and their manners and being under the superintending and benevolent and amiable prelates (the Right

¹⁰ McGill, *op .cit.*, pp. 79, 90-1.

¹¹ *Prospectus of the Female School of St. Clare Vincennes*, Knox County, Letter Book III, p. 2, Nazareth Archives, Nazareth, Kentucky.

¹² *Western Sun*, Aug. 28, 1824, XV, no. 28, p. 3.

Revd. Bishops Flaget and David) has obvious inducements to a liberal patronage.

Besides the school Champomier had other plans to elevate his people to what he regarded as their proper social position. The first step was to erect a decent church. The only building in the community which he considered suitable for church purposes had just been turned into a dance hall. Champomier decided that he would have to build. He was courageous and a man of vision. Perhaps he planned beyond his means, yet there is justification for his efforts. His people had certainly lost caste, not only in their private lives through their ignorance and their poverty, but also in religion by their contentment with the hovel that was used for religious services. Champomier had none of the sense of inferiority that has frequently paralyzed the activities of Catholic groups when surrounded by wealthier and more numerous non-Catholics. He looked about the settlement, saw the incoming immigrants and realized that the Catholic Church of Indiana and Illinois would in time be far more numerous and important than the small local congregation. At the same time he knew that Vincennes, the heir of the old French Catholicism, was the proper leader in building for the Church of the future. He was already visiting regularly the Catholic families in what are now Daviess and Martin Counties and across the river in Illinois. For these rapidly increasing groups of Catholics he determined to build not merely a parish church but a cathedral.

The reaction of his parish is not very clear. The brief minutes of the trustees' meeting indicate that they did not join readily in his plans. Later, Champomier stated that he had forced them to follow him. Hyacinthe Lasselle signed some of the public notices as president of trustees, but he seems to have been cold to Champomier's plans. A letter written by Champomier to Lasselle,¹³ after the priest left Vincennes, indicates that the relations between these two men were never too cordial. But

13 Champomier to Lasselle, April 27, 1831, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

Champomier regarded himself as a commander and a teacher, rather than as a co-worker, and refused to be dependent upon the trustees. He wanted to lead them to new levels. His relations with the non-Catholics¹⁴ seem to have been very cordial. To them he appealed and from them received aid and encouragement. They were for the most part accustomed to attend the services in the Catholic chapel, when they could. The chapel itself was not large enough for them. Furthermore, they were interested in the welfare of their fellow citizens, and the interests of the community at large were affected by this church. Finally, Champomier appealed to Catholics in other dioceses, going personally to other cities and asking Badin to aid him in France.

The plans called for a notable¹⁵ structure with a front of 60 feet extending back 115 feet. A transept, 135 feet by 15 feet, was to be built later. Beyond these there would be a semi-circular sanctuary with side chapels and sacristy in rear. One can hardly blame the trustees for being a bit rebellious at the prospect; the pastor himself, despite aid from outside the settlement, was to find the task more than he had anticipated. Within the parish he turned over the 130 acres belonging to the church for farming purposes, and called upon the members of the parish to do the work. Joseph and Michael Theriac were hired to cultivate the corn. Hogs and cattle were purchased and fattened for sale. The produce of the farm was sent on flatboats to New Orleans to be sold. Church fairs and other benefits were held to raise money.

Champomier next appealed to the non-Catholics of the place, and for this purpose a public meeting to advance the project was called at the school house of the Sisters. The announcement in the *Western Sun*, of July 23, 1825,¹⁶ proposed the erection in Vincennes of a "neat, if not splendid, brick church." "Should their fellow-citizens wish to join them in the attempt,

14 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 148.

15 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 147.

16 *Western Sun*, July 23, 1825, XVI, no. 23, p. 3.

or benevolently aid the enterprise, they would gratefully accept of their assistance. Although it is for the celebration of the Roman Catholic worship, still all who conduct themselves properly will be allowed admittance as well as possession of pews." The support of non-Catholics was readily given, an eloquent example of the usual cooperation in such enterprises in frontier settlements. Further evidence of the pride these non-Catholics took in the enterprise of Father Champomier is the public letter of Protestant members of the community in praise of his efforts published in the *Truth Teller* of New York, one of the important Irish Catholic weeklies of the time. The letter addressed to the pastor speaks of the "zeal and perseverance with which you have undertaken and prosecuted a building," and is signed by the prominent citizens of Vincennes of those days, Moses Tabbs, J. C. S. Harrison, John Ewing, D. S. Brown, R. S. Reynolds. Writing to Badin, Champomier said that among these non-Catholics he had friends as warm and as generous as among the Catholics.¹⁷

He went first to St. Louis and St. Genevieve across the Mississippi, stopping, also, among the missions of Kentucky where he received other contributions which greatly encouraged him. He next made a trip to the parishes of Louisiana but collected little money. Bishop Flaget wrote letters praising the zeal of his young friend and encouraging the neighboring bishops to help him. "The poverty in which he is obliged to live would discourage the most fervent missionaries. Despite all this he is content, and although a good number of his parishioners are very ungrateful to him he loves them and does them as much good as he can."¹⁸

In the meantime work was begun on the new church. On March 4, 1826, the *Western Sun* carried the announcement of the laying of the corner-stone to take place on March 30. To Catholic and non-Catholic alike Champomier,¹⁹ announced

17 *The Truth Teller*, New York, II, Aug. 17, 1826.

18 Flaget to Tessier, April 9, 1826, StMSA.

19 *Western Sun*, March 4, 1826, XVII, no. 3, p. 3.

that Indiana was at last to have a temple worthy of religious service.

The missionary was prophetic, but a bit premature, in announcing at the same time that the new church would be the cathedral of a bishop who would be appointed for the two states of Indiana and Illinois. Champomier was endeavoring in every way to arouse the bishops of the region to ask Rome for the appointment. He found Bishop Flaget very willing to be relieved of his charges across the Ohio. To Rosati, the new bishop of St. Louis, he urged the petition to Rome for the appointment of the veteran missionary, Father Stephen Theodore Badin,²⁰ as the man most qualified in experience in the missions, and as one who knew the people of Vincennes.

On March 30 with much pomp and ceremony the cornerstone was laid. A procession to the scene of the new church was followed by prayer and a public discourse by Father Champomier. The ceremony was attended in great numbers by the Catholics and non-Catholics.²¹ This accomplished, Champomier started for the East on April 11, where he succeeded in collecting about \$2000.²² On his return he found, however, that some of the incomplete structure had been destroyed by fire eight days after his departure. The next three months he spent among his missions, and then decided that perhaps more money could be raised in Canada. Already three walls of the church had been raised, and he had begun to see the realization of his dreams.

On his way to the north Champomier visited the neglected Indians of the upper Wabash promising them a missionary as soon as possible. Scarcely had he begun his begging tour in Canada, when he fell ill. To add to his misery, he found that the time chosen was a poor one, because the Canadians were busy repairing their own churches. The fevers which he had

20 Champomier to Rosati, Dec. 12, 1825, AASTL.

21 *Western Sun*, April 8, 1825, XVII, no. 8, p. 2, and May 6, 1826, XVII, no. 12, p. 1.

22 Champomier to Badin, Jan. 17, 1827, *Annales*, III, p. 230.

contracted so weakened him that he felt obliged to get out of the country. Friends from New York and Washington, hearing of his misfortunes, brought him back to the United States, where, after visiting with friends for the recovery of his health, and calling on Archbishop Ambrose Marechal of Baltimore, he started back to his mission. At Louisville he was greeted with the news that shortly after his departure from Vincennes, on November 6, a violent wind and rain storm had struck Vincennes doing great damage to the town and tearing down two sides of the new cathedral²³ and the work of the carpenters. Such a disaster would have crushed a man of weaker character, but Champomier merely repeated the act of resignation of Job and announced that he was making plans for new begging trips to Louisiana, to Missouri and perhaps to Havana. The loss of the money he had raised by such hard labors was, however, a blow from which Champomier, harassed as he was by unfriendly critics, never recovered. He made new trips to the East and the South. His own brother, who had settled in Maryland lent him some money, but he could not collect enough to offset his losses and yet pay for his new cathedral. His appeal to Europe brought some aid. To save himself from these overwhelming difficulties Champomier renewed his petitions to the bishops for a bishop of Vincennes. Flaget²⁴ took up the question with Bishop Rosati and sought to have Father Blanc, the former pastor, restored as Bishop. Blanc, however, was destined to remain in New Orleans. Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore became interested and called for a report from Champomier on the condition of the cathedral, and the Catholicity of the region.

The new cathedral was neither finished nor consecrated. The building was enclosed and the walls were painted. But Champomier found his life a nightmare of debts.²⁵ There were no other sources of appeal, unless Rome should come to his aid. He

23 *Western Sun*, Nov. 11, 1826, no. 40, p. 3.

24 Flaget to Archbishop James Whitfield, Nov. 2, 1828, UNDA.

25 Champomier to Rosati, June 10, 1828, AASL.

besought Bishop Rosati to send word of his plight to Rome, for he found that the debts so worried him that he could not rest. He rightfully believed that he had laid the foundations for a strong Catholic establishment, but an unfortunate combination of events had nearly crushed his spirit. He never grew weary, however, of his efforts to care for the many Catholics in his extensive mission.

The tornado that leveled the walls of the unfinished church was not Champomier's only loss during his trip to Canada in 1826. The fevers that swept the village caused so much sickness among the Sisters that all except Sister Henrietta Gardiner were soon ill and classes were discontinued. Soon she, too, fell sick and, worn out by her care for the others, she succumbed on October 26, 1826.²⁶ The stricken household recovered sufficiently, however, to announce the resumption of classes beginning December 13.²⁷

In June, 1829,²⁸ Bishop Flaget and his eloquent companion, Father Robert Abell, made another episcopal visitation to Indiana. Their first stop was at New Albany, where mass was said in a private house, and then at the French settlement of the Knobs. Since 1812 there had been a small French community from Lorraine settled in the hills above the town of New Albany. Fairly successful farmers, who had remained faithful to the practices of their religion, they belonged to a later immigration which had come down the Ohio, and they were accustomed to go to the churches of Kentucky for religious services. Father Abell endeavored to care for them from Louisville, and, according to tradition, a log church was built about 1816 on the farm of Thomas Piers or Pierce,²⁹ an Irishman who had joined the community. From New Albany the bishop passed along the Louisville-Vincennes road to Mt.

²⁶ McGill, *op. cit.*, 90-1.

²⁷ *Western Sun*, Dec. 2, 1826, XVII, no. 43, p. 3.

²⁸ Spalding, *Flaget*, pp. 265-6.

²⁹ Alice K. Green, "French Settlements in Floyd County," *IMH*, X, pp. 64-9.

Pleasant,³⁰ then a rather important shipping point on the White River. In 1823 Bishop Flaget had confirmed 34 persons living in the vicinity. On this trip he found 40 Catholic families in and around the settlement. As Flaget and Abell were preaching the mission of the Jubilee of 1825, extended by special privilege to these missions, 70 persons received holy communion and 31 persons were confirmed.

From Mt. Pleasant Bishop Flaget visited Black Oak Ridge, now Montgomery, where the log church of St. Peter's had been built and blessed during the pastorate of Father Blanc in 1820.³¹ These Catholic families, the Montgomerys, the Kidwells, the Dants, and their neighbors were immigrants from Kentucky, descendants of early English Catholics in Maryland. Here the number of confirmations was 47. The next Catholic group visited was that in the town of Washington. A nucleus of Catholic settlements had begun here with the Spink and Murphy families. There was no church, so Flaget and Abell preached in the courthouse. From Washington the jubilee missionaries passed on to Vincennes, arriving there on June 17.

On June 18,³² the Feast of Corpus Christi, Flaget and Abell opened a week's mission of prayer and preaching in celebration of the jubilee. Every day at nine a high Mass was sung by the bishop, who also preached. In the evening there were devotions, singing of hymns and another sermon. These sermons for the old congregation were in French, and the Bishop spoke in a kind and paternal way urging the old parishioners to return to the practice of their religion and encouraging those who were faithful.

After the French sermons Father Abell spoke in English. He was an imposing person over six feet tall, with well proportioned figure. His voice possessed oratorical power and, combined with his prepossessing appearance and a certain dramatic quality, gave him a command over his audience. He was com-

³⁰ *Indianapolis Catholic Record*, VII, no. 25, Dec. 19, 1889.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² *United States Catholic Miscellany* (Charleston, S. C.), IX, p. 70.

pared by his fellow Kentuckians in his day to Felix Grundy.³³ Like those old-time pulpit orators Father Abell would preach for hours at a stretch, but he had such magnetic powers that his audiences found the time short and availed themselves of every opportunity to hear him. That his hearers were not more numerous on these occasions was blamed on the need of the farmers to tend their fields. Abell welcomed the non-Catholics who came to hear him, and expressed his happiness that now there was a church large enough to accommodate them. The charm with which he handled his non-Catholic audiences is shown in a report of one of his discourses after which he answered questions which had been sent to him in writing:

‘Does your church worship images?’ ‘If she does not, why do you use them?’ The utmost anxiety was manifest when he read the question, and the look of triumph which several exchanged were evident when he answered the first question ‘Yes’. And then he proceeded to explain the nature of worship and the distinction between that which is relative and that which is absolute. The change was visible through the congregation, and subdued satisfaction appeared in many; equally happy and convincing was his answer to the question, ‘What is purgatory?’ Another which was put required of course a separate examination of each of its parts: ‘Can the priest or the Pope forgive sins or grant an indulgence?’ I do not know that at any time I have seen our good neighbors in this place more gratified. A considerable number of our enlightened and candid fellow citizens of other denominations, kindly expressed their satisfaction at the removal of many unfounded notions, and the exhibition of the doctrines of our church in a correct point of view.³⁴

During the visit Bishop Flaget confirmed 92 persons. The number of communicants was over 300, many of whom had been away from the sacraments for several years. Seven adults were also received into the Church. On July 12, the Bishop

33 (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 150-1.

34 *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, IX, p. 70.

returned to Kentucky by way of Washington and Mt. Pleasant, accompanied for many miles by a group of the citizens on horseback.

Other priests who signed the baptismal register during the jubilee year were Father Simon Fouche, a priest from Kentucky, and Father Anthony Blanc. Father Blanc, as is evidenced by his correspondence with Hyacinthe Lasselle, had never forgotten his old parish at Vincennes. At one time he wrote to Lasselle to express his sorrow at missing some of the citizens of Vincennes who tried to call on him on one of their business trips to New Orleans. On another occasion he wrote of some negroes he had met, a man and his wife who formerly lived at Vincennes. They had been unjustly kidnapped and sold into slavery, and had appealed to him for help. Blanc urged Lasselle to set the legal machinery in motion to save these poor people.³⁵

Champomier struggled on. There is little record of his activities outside of the registers of the church. He continued to visit Mt. Pleasant, St. Peter's³⁶ at Black Oak Ridge, Washington, and the French on the River Cat. The debts he had contracted for his church preyed heavily upon his mind. His associations with the trustees did not improve, although he had many friends within and without the Catholic group of citizens. Finally, he decided to give up his unequal fight. His last entry was a baptism performed on March 17, 1831. His letter to Hyacinthe Lasselle³⁷ from New York on April 27, reproached Lasselle for his opposition, and was quite bitter in its tone. He gave as his future address Havre de Grace, France, although a tradition says that he died of a fever in Mexico the following year.

Of the remarkable men who labored to keep alive the Catholicity of old Vincennes, Champomier ranks next to Rivet in his accomplishments and zeal. But unlike Rivet, whose humble

35 Blanc to Lasselle, July 11, 1823, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

36 Champomier to Badin, *Annales*, III, p. 226.

37 Champomier to Lasselle, April 27, 1831, Lasselle Papers, ISLC.

sanctity and self-abnegation won over all the people Champomier ruled with the force of a military commander, and there is a bit of irony in his final letter to Lasselle in which he says that Lasselle, a general, never let him forget that he was only a captain. All the evidence indicated that Champomier submitted only to his bishop who was, in turn, a great admirer of his zeal. Flaget³⁸ understood the sad condition into which the neglected parish had sunk and supported Champomier in his hard fight against vice. The Bishop charged that leadership of the opposition to the priest was provided by some of the trustees who did not receive the sacraments and were only nominal Christians. In reproving this opposition, he wrote: "But what I know is that Mr. Champomier is certainly a disinterested young man, a most sober one, modest with women, zealous in fulfilling the sacred functions of his ministry, esteemed and even beloved by the people of his congregation that are strict in their Christian duties."³⁹ Neither Flaget nor Champomier were moved with bitterness in their dealings with the people. Stern measures were required. The compulsion that requires truant children to go to school was necessary, that the low condition to which they had unwittingly become accustomed should not continue. Education, regular instruction and administration of the sacraments would in time remove the vices to which they had succumbed. Spurned by many of his parishioners, Champomier had labored on, correcting vices, building a church, starting a school, and successfully demanding a resident bishop, to care for the people.

In connection with his effort to get a bishop, his letter to Archbishop Ambrose Marechal⁴⁰ of Baltimore gives an interesting picture of the conditions in Vincennes. Marechal had asked Champomier for a statement of conditions at Vincennes to be used in a petition to Rome for a bishop. Champomier

38 Flaget to Badolet, Jan. 18, 1825, Georgetown Archives.

39 Flaget to A. M. Rhodier, Sept. 26, 1824, VPR; Flaget to Champomier, March, 1825; Flaget aux habitants de Vincennes, June 1, 1824, 92.3 Georgetown Archives; Flaget to Badolet, Jan. 18, 1825, Georgetown Archives.

40 Champomier to Marechal, June 1, 1827, 21AAe, AAB.

mentioned the unfinished cathedral, a presbytery of two rooms, a school house occupied by the Sisters of Charity, and a cemetery. The whole had been incorporated with a board of trustees of which the bishop of the diocese, and the resident missionary in his place, was the president. They had a quantity of land about the church, 40 arpents by 4, and another plot, 3 miles from the village, of 64 arpents which was inherited from Father Rivet. He estimated that there were 2,400 Catholics in and around Vincennes who belonged to the parish of St. Francis, and more than 2,000 more both in Illinois and Indiana, whom he had discovered in his travels. Furthermore, there was a continual immigration. Of the non-Catholics of the region he offered the opinion that a bishop, properly assisted, could in a very little time convert three fourths of the Protestants. Despite the journeys which he had been obliged to make, he had received more than twelve a week into the Church. In addition to the white population, there were the Indians with whom he had been able to do little. The church which he was building would be the only church in the city. "The Protestants assist at the divine services, listen to the instructions and will become necessarily members of the church. This all of my five years experience assures me."

Marechal wrote again immediately asking about the charter and the trustees, as the recent trustee scandal and the Hogan⁴¹ schism of Philadelphia were constantly before him. Champomier replied⁴² that after three years of trouble, he now ruled the church alone, and offered, if Marechal suggested it, to turn in the charter at the next meeting of the legislature. However, in case of a vacancy, the trustees would again come into power according to the charter, because they would appoint the administrators. Certainly Champomier was understating his difficulty with the trustees. It was his iron will that kept them in check. His successor, lacking that will, was to walk a very thorny path.

41 Francis Edward Tourscher, *The Hogan Schism and Trustee Troubles in St. Mary's Church*, Philadelphia (1930).

42 Champomier to Marechal, July 22, 1827, 14G3, AAB.

Of the general economic and social condition of the Catholics, as distinct from their neighbors in Vincennes in these later years, there is not much to be said. In 1820, according to Bishop Bruté,⁴³ they had asked and obtained permission to settle the commons south of the town. They had felt rather bitterly the attempts to give the commons for the benefit of the Vincennes University, and sought in this way to better their condition. Thus, there arose the communities called the Catherinettes, the Cutte, and the Mamelles, almost exclusively French communities. Great prosperity does not seem to have been theirs. Champomier admitted that his people could not pay the expense necessary for his church, and he told Marechal that the money received from the church pews, paid in maize, would not support the bishop he judged necessary for Vincennes.

Of the general prosperity of the region we know little more. Quantities of marketable goods were carried down the Wabash and Ohio to the Mississippi and New Orleans.⁴⁴ In the spring of 1826, the *Niles Weekly Register* carried an item that in the spring freshets 152 flatboats passed Vincennes loaded for New Orleans. They were all well manned and laden. The following is an estimate of some of the chief items of their cargoes: 10,000 hams, 2,500 live cattle, 10,000 pounds of beeswax, 3,600 venison hams." Besides this we know that other produce passed down the Ohio and down the White river. There was considerable loss by reason of the sunken logs in the rivers, accidents, and the spoilage in transit. The *Niles Register* article concludes: "Indiana is populating very rapidly and some begin to think that it will overtake even the wonderful state of Ohio. It is not morally certain that it will be one of the great states, as several of them are called." Indiana, actually, was beginning to suffer from the lack of transportation facilities.⁴⁵ Illinois, Michigan,

43 Bruté in the *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 117.

44 *Niles Weekly Register*, July 8, 1826, XXX, 338; Esarey, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

45 Elbert Jay Benton, *The Wabash Route in the Development of the Old Northwest*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science, XXI, p. 91.

Wisconsin and Ohio with their better lake and river facilities were to have the advantage both in bringing in immigrants, and in providing markets for those immigrants once they had progressed in agriculture beyond the subsistence farming stage. From this time on, however, the Catholic communities and individuals rise and fall with the non-Catholic majority, and it is practically impossible to single out Catholics as an economic group and speak of their progress and prosperity.

Of the 340,000 people who had come into Indiana by 1830 it is probable that not more than 20,000⁴⁶ were of the Catholic faith. Of these 20,000, only the three or four thousand around Vincennes received regular attention from a priest. Many of them were to lose their faith and, in the absence of priestly ministrations, to enter various religious groups which had more churches and a more numerous ministry. Of the scattered groups of Catholic families we have little information. In the northern part of the state, the Baptists' missionary McCoy was constantly meeting French⁴⁷ and half-breed fur traders and guides who were of Catholic faith. How early the Catholic families, discovered by missionaries in the 1830's, entered these regions we do not know. The Indian treaties mention some half-breeds living in the lands ceded by the Indians at the time of the treaties.⁴⁸ The Indian wars of the 1790's and the first decade of the nineteenth century did eliminate much of the white population that had filtered in before their outbreak. Yet Burnet, Bailey, Lafontaine, Comparet, Couquillard, Louis-ignon, Peltier, Robideaux, Godfroy, Chabert, Minie, Langlois, Bourne,⁴⁹ and, probably, many others of whom we have no record were active in the Indian trade in the northern part of the state during the period immediately following the close of

46 Based on maps and figures in the Bruté Notes, UNDA.

47 McCoy, *Baptist Indian Missions*, pp. 133, 139, 225, 237, 247, 248, 253-5.

48 Kappler, *Indian Treaties*, II, pp. 172-3 for those around Fort Wayne, and pp. 199-200 for those of the St. Joseph.

49 Names listed in the various licenses, etc., in the Tipton Papers, ISLC.

the War of 1812, and, of most of these, we have evidence that they professed the Catholic religion.

In the southern part of the state the immigration had come mostly from Kentucky, or by way of Kentucky from Virginia and the Carolinas. Some of the Carolinians had been members of the Catholic congregation of the Charleston diocese. The greatest migrations, however, came from Maryland and Kentucky. Some of these settled along the Ohio, but most of them came nearer to Vincennes. The records of the people along the Ohio, who were served by the Kentucky missionaries, apparently have been destroyed, but we know from accepted traditions that there were Catholic families who received occasional ministrations. Those between Vevay and Cincinnati were cared for by the Dominicans. Father Abell from Louisville visited the Catholic families across the river, as well as the French settlement at the Knobs. Around Vincennes there were more compact settlements in Martin, Daviess, and Knox counties. But farther to the east we have evidence of Catholic families scattered in such settlements as Columbus, Shelbyville and along the White Water Valley. The only churches of any description were those at Vincennes, St. Peter's at Black Oak Ridge, now Montgomery, Daviess County, and at the Knobs.

Champomier endeavored to care for all these families as best he could, but actual pastoral work was out of the question. To the delight of the Kentucky families settled about St. Peter's, Flaget sent them another priest. He was a native of Vincennes,⁵⁰ baptized in 1804 by the saintly Father Olivier, Father Simon Lalumiere, son of Antoine Petit who had changed the family name to Lalumiere. He had studied under Bishop David at St. Thomas Seminary at Bardstown, was ordained in 1830 and sent immediately to care for the Indiana missions. He was a faithful priest and an active coadjutor of Champomier, Picot and Bruté. The Catholic families of Daviess County imme-

50 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 155-6.

diately started to build a new church and, within a year, the new pastor at Vincennes, Father Picot, assisted at the solemn blessing of the log church of St. Peter's. From this as a center, Father Lalumiere endeavored to visit the Catholics all along the White River and in the neighboring counties.

Among the Indians of the state the mission activities were in even worse condition. Rivet had been the last one to make much effort to work among them. Olivier spoke in his letters to Bishop Carroll of the Indians who came to confession at Vincennes. Blanc and Jeanjean visited those near Vincennes, and Indian names continued to appear in the Vincennes baptismal register. Champomier promised them that he would try to get them a missionary, when he visited them in 1826 on his way to Canada. The Potawatomi who inhabited the region of the St. Joseph and the Kankakee had not seen a missionary since the visit of Levadoux in 1795. Some of these Potawatomi, especially the village of Chief Pokagon, had remained more or less faithful to the practices which they had learned from the earlier missionaries. And in the late 1820's we find the better groups beseeching Father Richard for a resident missionary. Richard felt sorry for them but could do nothing. The majority of the Indians, under the influence of the liquor of the fur trader, had lapsed into paganism. After the conclusion of the War of 1812 the government had begun to take over their land and to remove them from the paths of the white frontiersmen. First the Delawares, then the remnants of the Miami, finally the Potawatomi were to be moved. The Baptist missionary McCoy, who, through Colonel Tremble,⁵¹ had received government aid at the Treaty of Chicago of 1821 to establish the Carey mission on the St. Joseph River, believed that the removal was the better way for these poor people.

The neglect of these Indians of the Northwest is sad to recall, but it can not be attributed to lack of zeal on the part of the early bishops. They had not the means. The choice for

⁵¹ McCoy, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

them was to send the few missionaries they had either to the whites or to the Indians.⁵² Of the whites, the French, English and Irish Catholics were already members of the Church and had first claim on the services of the priest, for it must be borne in mind that, west of the Alleghany Mountains, the Catholic Church was not establishing proselyting agencies, or making conversions. Catholic settlers, seeking fortune and freedom from oppressive situations, preceded the Church, and the Church was merely following the lost and scattered flock. The centers where priests were established were such places as Nelson County, Kentucky, among the Americans, and the sites of the old French missions among the French. Against this prior claim of settled Catholic communities the bishop had to weigh the claim of the Indians. The savages with whom Flaget, Rivet, Blanc, and later Bruté came in contact along the Wabash showed little trace of the labors of the early Jesuits. Bruté, who studied the problem of setting aside special Indian missionaries, pointed out the almost negligible traces of the work of the numerous Jesuits among the tribes of the Great Lakes, as compared with the results of the work of the smaller group of Jesuits who cared for the Maryland missions, which became the nucleus of the later Church in the United States. Flaget, in his letters to the *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation*, set forth quite clearly why he preferred the white to the Indian mission. The Indian missions, he said, are less fruitful because of the difficulties in the way of conversions. In the first place, he regarded as the chief obstacle, "The repugnance so unconquerable that the savages have for civilization, their degraded and stupified intellectual faculties, their hate and implacable vengeance, constant and disgusting drunkenness, insurmountable laziness, their wandering and vagabond life. . . ." The second obstacle was placed by the Indians themselves, in the way they "abandoned themselves to their violent passion for spirituous liquors

52 Bruté to Rosati, Oct. 1837, AASTL.

which are furnished by the American merchants.”⁵³ Flaget, however, did not condemn them entirely, and, if he had had any extra priests, he would most surely have sent them to the savages. “They all have a profound respect for the *great spirit* and manifest docility of character. The memory of the Jesuits is yet dear to them and the sight of the *black robe* excites in them sentiments of veneration. It is not a long time since they expressed the desire to have a priest who could occupy himself with the instruction of the sufficiently large number of their children, but that it was impossible for me to offer them.”⁵⁴

The Indians in the northern part of the state, had attracted the interest of Bishop Edward Fenwick, the zealous Dominican bishop of Cincinnati and administrator of Michigan and the Northwest, because the old St. Joseph Mission was geographically under his jurisdiction.⁵⁵ Like Vincennes, Fort St. Joseph had been erected in the days of French occupation to protect the trade route and as a center for the fur trade. The St. Joseph Mission, founded apparently towards the end of the seventeenth century, besides tending to the spiritual needs of the commandant and his troops cared also for the neighboring tribes of the Miami and Potawatomi. After the retirement of the French from the Great Lakes forts, the old fort of St. Joseph suffered three disastrous sieges. Pontiac captured the fort May 25, 1763, Jean Baptiste Hamelin with a force from Cahokia captured it again in 1780, and finally on February 12, 1781,⁵⁶ a group of soldiers from St. Louis and militia from Cahokia again captured the fort and plundered its supplies.

⁵³ *Annales*, III, p. 191; Father Gabriel Marest, S.J. who worked in the Illinois country expressed the same opinion about the conversion of the Indians. *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses, Mémoires D'Amérique*, Tome IV, pp. 196-7.

⁵⁴ *Annales*, III, p. 202.

⁵⁵ George Pare, “The St. Joseph Mission,” MVHR, XVII, pp. 24-54.

⁵⁶ Clarence W. Alvord, “The Conquest of St. Joseph, Michigan, by the Spaniards in 1781” *Missouri Hist. Review*, II, pp. 195-210; Frederick J. Teggart, “The Capture of St. Joseph, Michigan, by the Spaniards in 1781,” *Missouri Hist. Review*, V, pp. 214-28.

Fort St. Joseph was never reestablished, and most of the soldiers and traders who had located there, either were dispersed through the Middle West, or returned to Canada. Names which appeared later in the French settlements of Detroit, Mackinac, and Fort Wayne indicate, however, that some of these settlers did not leave the region. The mission attached to the fort was abandoned by missionaries even before the destruction of the fort, Pierre Gibault making the last entry in the baptismal register in 1773.⁵⁷ The withdrawal of the Jesuits had affected all missions.

Bishop Fenwick was endeavoring to reestablish the old mission centers of the Northwest. By 1825,⁵⁸ Detroit, Mackinac, Arbre Croche and Green Bay had received visitations of missionaries. Finally, one of the Indian chiefs of the St. Joseph Valley, Pokagon, came with some of his village to entreat Richard at Detroit⁵⁹ for a missionary. To Richard's amazement these Indians, who had not had a missionary during their lifetime, repeated the more common Catholic prayers to show that they had been faithful to their earlier instructions, handing down the teachings of the earlier priests from generation to generation. Richard was anxious to help them. In July, 1830,⁶⁰ Father Frederick Rese, later first bishop of Detroit, while making an official visitation as Vicar General of Fenwick, visited the Indians on the St. Joseph. After instructing the chief, Leopold Pokagon, and the better informed members of his village, he baptized them, thirty persons in all. But Rese had to go on with his visitation. To the joy of the Indians Father Stephen Theodore Badin was in Detroit at that time visiting with his younger brother Father Francis Vincent

⁵⁷ George Pare, and Milo M. Quaife have edited this register in MVHR, XIII, pp. 201-39.

⁵⁸ V. F. O'Daniel, O.P., *The Right Reverend Edward Dominic Fenwick, O.P.*, Washington (1920), pp. 316-17, 328-32.

⁵⁹ Badin to M., *Annales*, IV, pp. 546-50.

⁶⁰ Richard to Fenwick, Aug. 17, 1830; Badin, Deseille, Petit baptismal register, UNDA.

Badin, Richard's helper, and consented to go to the village of Pokagon, on the St. Joseph River.

Badin was the most experienced missionary in the Middle West. He had left Kentucky, because of a controversy with Bishop Flaget over the control of certain properties, and had returned to France in 1818.⁶¹ Flaget had immediately made him his Vicar General in France, and the old missionary, whose heart had remained in the American missions, spent his time in his mother country gathering funds and men and doing all in his power to further the cause of these missions. At one time he thought of joining the Dominican order but, after a short time in the novitiate, he changed his mind, principally because he found it impossible in his advanced age to conform to the rules of a new mode of life. His brother, Francis Vincent Badin, in the meantime had been ordained and was working in Michigan, and the elder Badin, hearing that there would soon be a bishop for Detroit, decided to return to the United States and work in Michigan under Father Richard who was supposed to be the new bishop. He arrived in New York in 1828, and after visiting his old friends in Kentucky, St. Louis and Louisiana, he went again to Detroit, where he heard the pleas of the Potawatomi. He accepted the suggestions of Richard that he go to them and, with an interpreter, old Angelique Campau, set out toward the end of August for the St. Joseph River. There is plenty of the heroic in the sight of this little old missionary, already 60 years of age, setting out to live among savages to bring them the truths of Christianity.

Badin lived in the cabin of the chief, Pokagon, and, with the aid of his interpreter, went from cabin to cabin instructing the Indians in the prayers and the more fundamental truths of religion. He began to baptize the children and those well enough instructed among the adults.⁶² He bought an old house about two miles from the Indian village and converted it into a

⁶¹ Badin to Rosati, Feb. 6, 1829, AASTL.

⁶² Badin to M., *Annales*, IV, p. 550.

chapel. Once more the old St. Joseph Mission ministered to the faithful. Besides the Indians, Badin cared for the scattered French and half-breeds in the neighborhood.

The French settlement was chiefly on the east side of the St. Joseph, across the river from Pokagon Village. Of the names of these white or half-breed parishioners we find in the pages of Badin's baptismal register⁶³ only a few, such as Luc Bertrand, Archange Bourassa, Francois, daughter of Pierre Navarre, Isabelle, daughter of Charles and Isabelle Plante Lucier, Magdaleine Bertrand, Baptiste Rouleau and Sophie and Alexis Coquillard. For the Indians Badin began at once to plan a school, and, in the meantime, endeavored to instruct Pokagon in the arts of agriculture. His interpreter was an aged woman, but she had spent most of her life working as missionary among the Indians. Angelique Campau,⁶⁴ and three other women constituted a sisterhood formed by Father Gabriel Richard. They did not have regular vows, and intended to act as catechists for the Indian schools. Like Badin, Angelique was content to spend her remaining years in the service of the Church and her savage friends. Besides acting as interpreter for him, she also organized a small school for the children of Pokagon's village. Badin, however, was not satisfied, and when the Indians went on the chase in the winter months, he set out for Kentucky to obtain sisters and brothers to establish a regular Indian school.⁶⁵ He tried to get a Brother Joseph, a member of a brotherhood which Flaget had endeavored unsuccessfully to establish, but Flaget needed him for other work. For his sisters, he sought the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Kentucky, and obtained encouragement, but no aid. He hurried back to the St. Joseph to meet the Indians returning from the chase, so as not to lose time. He had received a promise of an

63 Badin, etc., baptismal register, UNDA; T. St. Pierre, *Histoire des Canadiens du Michigan*, p. 168; *Catholic Telegraph*, I (1832), p. 14.

64 Badin to Rosati, Feb. 6, 1829, AASTL; Catherine Stewart, *New Homes in the West*, Nashville, 1843, pp. 22-4.

65 Badin to Fenwick, April 11, 1831, UNDA.

episcopal visitation. Bishop Fenwick came to the mission July 25, 1831, and signed the baptismal register, as Bishop of Cincinnati and Administrator of Michigan territory. He inspected the school and partook, with mingled feelings, of an Indian meal before departing for the other missions.⁶⁶

Father Badin did not content himself with caring for the Indians of the St. Joseph Valley. He ministered to Catholics at Bertrand, Michigan, South Bend, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Logansport, and along the line of the proposed Wabash and Erie Canal. A correspondent in the *Catholic Miscellany* for August 27, 1831, after speaking of Badin's work among the Indians added:

During the hunting season the old gentleman visited Fort Wayne, at and near which he found about 100 Canadian Catholics. Having purchased a four-acre lot for the purpose of a church, they are now building one. In October he visited Chicago on the S. W. shore of Lake Michigan, where he found nearly 100 Canadians, and a tribe of sober, honest, peaceable and religious Indians, Kickapoos, who requested him to visit their village distant about 100 miles. Father Badin resides on the south bend of the river St. Joseph, about equally distant from Fort Wayne and Chicago. There are perhaps upwards of eighty Canadians also at this station.⁶⁷

Not all his baptismal records have been preserved, but that at Fort Wayne beginning January 23, 1831, contains many other French Canadian names,⁶⁸ thus indicating that here, as well as at Vincennes, the French were the foundation of the later church organization. It was only a few years before the Irish and Germans became numerous among the workers on the canal. It is rather a striking fact that after all the years since the French occupation of the land, the three chief centers of the Church in Indiana should be Vincennes, Fort Wayne and St.

⁶⁶ *Catholic Telegraph*, I (1832), p. 14.

⁶⁷ *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, XI (1831), p. 70.

⁶⁸ Cathedral Baptismal register, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Letter of Badin in the *Berichte der Leopoldinen Stiftung*, Vienna, Report II, 1831, p. 8.

Joseph, and that the white members of these churches were mostly French or of French descent. The new immigration was making itself felt, however, and just as the lower part of the state was filled with immigrants from Kentucky, the Carolinas, Virginia and Maryland, the northern part of the State was receiving its population from New England ⁶⁹ and New York, principally by the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal. But Vincennes remained the center of Indiana's Catholicity.

⁶⁹ Lois Kimball Mathews, *The Expansion of New England*, Boston, 1909, pp. 200-6.

CHAPTER VII

THE APPOINTMENT OF A BISHOP

LAWRENCE PICOT signed the baptismal register just three days after the last signature of his predecessor. It was unfortunate that Flaget had not a better person to succeed the stormy but successful Champomier. Picot,¹ a native of France, had been ordained at Bardstown and sent immediately to Vincennes. He was later to blame his failures on his ignorance of the customs of the country,² and his inexperience. Probably more important was his own lack of the strong will of his predecessor. He appears, from his letters, to have been willing enough, but unable to attain his wishes under difficulties. He lacked the determination of Champomier, and that quality of judgment which enables men to size up a new situation and to determine the proper solution. Problems he was sure to have, for the trustees, so long held in check, were apparently ready to assert their rights. They had made Champomier's stay unpleasant; they were to make Picot's impossible. Picot left himself open to attack, because of his love of company, and his desire for public honors. He had no financial means when he arrived, and was immediately placed under the necessity of calling upon the trustees for aid. They told him to get his supplies from M. Marchand, one of the town grocers, and promised to meet the bill. Picot accepted this arrangement to his later sorrow, for he did not understand, as Rivet had understood, that their intentions were far ahead of their deeds.

There is nothing in the records to indicate that Picot was at all deficient in his pastoral duties. He was instrumental in establishing the short-lived school at St. Peter's. His name appears with regularity in the baptismal register until he returned to Bardstown. He apparently continued Champomier's efforts to seek out the scattered Catholic families of the state.

1 (Cauthorn), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, pp. 151-2.

2 Picot to Rosati, Mar. 18, 1833, Aug. 10, 1833, AAStL.

In one case, he even visited the Indian villages on the upper Wabash, where he received honor not only from the the Indians, but also from the military leaders of the district.³

One of his first notable functions was the dedication of the new log church at St. Peter's.⁴ This edifice was to serve the eastern missions formerly attended from Vincennes. At the ceremony Picot celebrated the mass, and Lalumiere preached the sermon. There were in the neighborhood of the church, living at the forks of the White river, 102 Catholic families. Many of these had just moved in, and more were coming from Kentucky and Maryland. While the general fertility of the land and the accessibility by water transportation were important factors, the presence of a resident priest was attractive to these descendants of English Catholics. Plans were being set on foot for two more churches, one at Mt. Pleasant, where Flaget had visited on his way to Vincennes in 1829, and the other at St. Mary's on Bog's Creek, nine miles northeast from Black Oak Ridge. In Washington, the few Catholic families were beginning to plan a church.

Picot had as his especial care the French; outside Vincennes, he visited the Catholics in Illinois near the Wabash, and in the upper regions of the Wabash in Indiana. In 1832,⁵ he made a visit to the remnants of the Miami Indians along the Wabash, near the present city of Wabash, and attended a council of army men and Indians. General William Marshall, General John Tipton and Governor Noah Noble were present at the council. An Indian chief in a notable speech pointed out Father Picot to his red brethern as a "black robe" worthy of special honor and veneration, and as a representative of the French who had so long befriended the Indians. At the conclusion of his visit Father Picot baptized several Indian children, and then continued on his way to Fort Wayne. From Fort Wayne he went

3 *Catholic Herald*, Philadelphia, I (1831), p. 43.

4 *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, XI (1831), p. 70.

5 *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, XI (1831), p. 110; *Catholic Herald*, loc. cit.; Flaget to Father Frederick Rese, July 5, 1832, UNDA.

to Badin's Chapel at Pokagon's village, where he again interviewed the Indians and, at Badin's request, baptized some of them.

Meanwhile, his life at Vincennes was becoming rather unpleasant. He was, apparently, in ignorance of the obstacles ahead. He continued to go about his work, caring little about his expenses. In November, 1832,⁶ Bishops Rosati and Flaget met at Vincennes to formulate their petition to Rome for a bishop for Vincennes, but they do not seem to have taken much interest in the financial tangles of Picot. Father Abell accompanied Bishop Flaget, and entertained the English-speaking people of Vincennes with his powers of oratory.

Shortly after their departure, Picot found himself sued for \$10.00 by John Moore for dinners served in the Moore household. At first, Picot regarded the matter lightly, but the court rendered judgment in favor of Moore and in June, 1833, ordered Picot to pay \$20.⁷ Picot then went to Bardstown to attend a synod, expecting to collect money at the same time. The synod was not held because of an epidemic of cholera, and Picot's attempt to collect money to pay his assessment failed. When he returned, the sheriff was waiting for him, and making an appraisal of his goods for a sale. Picot sold his share of the parish library and other articles to raise enough money to win another delay of 30 days, and wrote to Rosati⁸ asking him to lend him the rest of the money. Then the trustees struck another blow. On his arrival they had agreed to pay his accounts with M. Marchand.⁹ Picot had not learned that the poor people of Vincennes seldom fulfilled their subscriptions to the church, or he might have been more cautious in accepting their promise to pay his bills. The trustees now refused to pay, say-

6 Rosati to Father John Timon, Nov. 16, 1832, UNDA; Picot to Rosati, Dec. 9, 1832, AASTL; Spalding, *Flaget*, p. 273.

7 Picot to Rosati, July 9, 1833, AASTL.

8 Picot to Rosati, Aug. 10, 1833, AASTL.

9 Picot to Rosati, Aug. 10, 1833, AASTL; Bruté to Rese, Jan. 8, 1835, UNDA.

ing that Picot had spent too much, whereupon Marchand went to court and secured a judgment against Picot to the amount of \$50. Picot could raise but \$10. The payments for the benches and other incomes were usually made in maize, and, as the crop failed that year, even that help was denied him. He wrote his next letter of appeal to Rosati from the "Prison of Vincennes." Once out of the jail he did not tarry long in Vincennes; he was recalled by Flaget to Bardstown. He was never paid for his two years service in Vincennes, and, because of subsequent disobedience to Flaget, that Bishop suspended him from his priestly functions after a few years.

His pastorate was not successful in terms of the social progress of the Church, yet he did supply the sacramental ministrations, and his failure may be charged to the obstinacy of the trustees as well as to his own poor management. Towards the end of October, his place was taken by Father Louis Petit, a Jesuit¹⁰ and a member of the group at St. Mary's College in Bardstown, who endeavored to care for Vincennes and the other French settlements. Whatever setback the Church may have received in Vincennes during the pastorate of Picot was offset by the advancement in other sections of the state.

Father Stephen Badin, despite his sixty years, began to lay plans with his accustomed vigor for the Church in northern Indiana. Bishop Fenwick had obtained from the War Department an allowance of \$1000 a year for the three schools to be established for the Indians under his care at L'Arbre Croche, Green Bay and on St. Joseph River.¹¹ Badin immediately began to plan an orphan asylum and school. Besides the small tract which he had near the village of Pokagon, he purchased from the government and from the other holders about 524 acres of land enclosing two small lakes near the St. Joseph River and a few miles south of the Michigan-Indiana state line.¹² He then

10 (Cauthorne), *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral*, p. 155.

11 *Catholic Telegraph*, I (1832), p. 199.

12 Transcripts of deeds in UNDA.

presented a petition to the Indiana Legislature to incorporate an orphan asylum.¹³ The petition was granted. Badin then began to look around for Sisters to conduct the school which he proposed to establish on the site of the present University of Notre Dame. In the meantime, he had other pressing problems in handling his red-skinned charges.

The Black Hawk troubles had aroused the scattered white population of northern Indiana, and rumors were flying about that all the Indians were to join in the hostilities.¹⁴ Badin found the Potawatomi disposed to peace, but uneasy about the efforts of the government to move them west of the Mississippi. Shortly after his arrival, the peace of the neighborhood was disturbed by the murder in a drunken brawl of an Indian leader, named Nanankoy, by Topinabee, the chief of the whole Potawatomi nation. A council of the Indians of the tribe was held at the grounds of Carey Mission, near Niles, Michigan. Badin and his interpreter, Angelique Campau, and representatives of the government were in attendance when Topinabee surrendered himself according to the Indian custom for the punishment of death. But when the Indians were ready to kill Topinabee, Angelique Campau intervened, offering her life instead. The Indians delayed and, after the interposition of Colonel Stewart, the Indian agent, and Father Badin, the relatives of the murdered man accepted presents instead of his death in expiation for the crime. Topinabee, himself, apparently moved by the circumstances of his release, came to Badin and promised to abstain from whiskey. Badin used this occasion to prepare a speech condemning the evils of whiskey and showing the Indians the uselessness of killing Topinabee:

God has said: 'Love one another', and forgive, if you wish me to forgive you, who have often offended me in drinking whiskey, and in many other ways.' 'If you forgive not others their offences

13 Badin to Tipton, Dec. 29, 1832, ACHR, vol. XXV (1908), p. 26; Badin to Purcell, Sept. 22, 1834, UNDA.

14 Badin to Purcell, June 20, 1832, *Catholic Telegraph*, I (1832), p. 311.

to you, I will not forgive you your offences to me' . . . One word more: Open your ears—no man, by killing Topinabee, your chief, could restore Nanankoy to life, nor give happiness in the other world; but great mischief would be done by adding sorrow to sorrow, and tears to tears. I, your father, am confident that all wise men among your white friends will say that what I am writing here to my children of the poutouatamy nation is right and true . . .¹⁵

Badin made unsuccessful efforts to obtain the site of the Carey Baptist mission where the Baptist minister, Isaac McCoy, had conducted his school until his removal to the West.¹⁶ The Baptists had given up the school in the summer of 1830. The Indians joined in his petition, but, because of some technicalities, and the impending removal of the Indians,¹⁷ the transfer was never made. Badin brought with him Mr. Ghislain Boheme,¹⁸ a deacon, whom he instructed in the ways of the mission, and who remained with him until the fall; then he returned to his studies at Cincinnati. Late in 1832, Badin received as his assistant, and his successor in the Indian missions, the young Father Louis DeSeille, a Flemish priest who carried on the work until his death in 1837. Badin and his helpers busied themselves in teaching the Indians domestic arts. He boasted that they had made Pokagon sow and reap wheat in 1831 for the first time in his life,¹⁹ and that the harvest of 1832 promised to be better. Under Badin's direction, the Indians had made fences of wooden rails about their cornfields. They had, however, but two plows and three pairs of oxen in the whole village. Badin found that the Indians thought it degrading to labor in the fields, and in order to dispel this delusion, he himself took up a hoe and, at times, went to work in the fields.

15 Documents (first draft) of Rev. Stephen Badin on the Potowatomi, Oct. 30, 1832, UNDA.

16 McCoy, *Indian Missions*, pp. 376-7, 387-9.

17 A. Edwards to Lewis Cass, Sept. 12, 1830, Office of Indian Affairs, Mich., Superintendency, in National Archives.

18 Badin to Purcell, June 20, 1832, *Catholic Telegraph*, I (1832), p. 311.

19 *Idem*.

Toward the end of 1832,²⁰ Badin could claim that there were at least 360 Indians who were under instruction, besides more than 100 children who had been baptized. The spirit of piety had induced an industriousness into the Indians that soon made their cornfields look even better than those of their white neighbors. Their wheat crop was sufficient to take care of them until the maize ripened. However, Badin admits that he and his companions suffered from a lack of meat. There was one drawback to all this industry. The Indians were so busy with their crops and with hunting, that the schools could not be organized. Badin and his interpreter had to be content with only classes in reading for the children. They insisted on the performing of some religious duties at the rising and the setting of the sun. He gives us a glimpse of the regime he set up in this revived mission:

At 12 o'clock the trumpet gives the signal of the *Angelus*, and afterwards four of us give lessons. Miss Lquette, old as she is, does the same every day after Mass. Her activity is equal to her charity and zeal. It is a subject of admiration for me to hear her, and to notice the powerful impression her discourses make on the hearers. They are catechized every day after Mass. Pokagon is constantly at work for both soul and body. He is truly a Christian orator, understands and practices well his religion—much respected by all his American neighbors.²¹

With the coming of Father DeSeille, Badin found himself free to pursue his plans about his orphanage, and to interest himself in the spiritual welfare of the Catholics at Fort Wayne and in the other scattered settlements in northern Indiana. On Christmas day, 1832, he was at Fort Wayne, and, from there, he appears to have gone to Kentucky to seek Sisters for his school. In his absence Father Ghislain Boheme, who had been ordained at Cincinnati, took care of the Catholics in the neighborhood of Fort Wayne. Boheme²² had as his special field parts of Ohio

20 Badin Letter of Dec. 12, 1831, *Annales*, IV, p. 167.

21 Badin to Fenwick (1832), UNDA.

22 Boheme to Rese, Pentecost, 1833, UNDA.

and southeastern Michigan outside of Detroit, but, finding that Fort Wayne was neglected, he wrote to Father Frederick Rese, administrator of Cincinnati, for permission to attend to its needs. In June, 1833, he informed Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati that there were over 200 Catholics at Fort Wayne and that Mr. Augenback had sacrificed his time to instruct the children in religion during the previous six months. He kept the names of those whom he baptized in his baptismal register²³ for his regular mission and, on the fly-leaf, he listed those who had received the sacraments in Fort Wayne during the paschal season of 1833, 38 in all, including "6 or 7 Irishmen *Deus me adjuvet*." Of the care of the scattered families at Logansport and north central Indiana we have little to record, except when Father Badin served them on his occasional visits. He had returned from Kentucky by October, 1833, and spent most of the time from December until February at Fort Wayne, leaving Father DeSeille in charge of the more northern Catholics.

Father Badin had received the assistance of two young women from the convent of the Sisters of Charity at Nazareth, Kentucky, and they went to live for the winter with Father DeSeille, in the miserable cabin at Pokagon's village. Father Badin decided to wait until the next spring before building his permanent school on the larger plot near South Bend. The two women, Sister Lucina Mary Whitaker and Sister Magadalen Ann Jackson,²⁴ were not prepared for the desperate condition of the northern mission station. They found their habitation "more like a house for criminals than for Christians." One of them wrote: "I thought my heart would break. I felt as though I had left all that was near and dear to me."²⁵ These women

²³ Boheme Baptismal Register, UNDA.

²⁴ Data in record book of community Archives, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky; Badin to Purcell, Feb. 15, 1834, UNDA. Badin speaks of them as Clarissa Whitaker and Eliza Jackson, but they are apparently the same two.

²⁵ Sisters of Charity to Rese, Feb. 4, 1834. Archives of Nazareth Academy,

had reasons for discouragement, for they had cut themselves off from their mother community in Kentucky the previous summer, and the prospects must have looked dreary indeed at Pokagon's village. But they soon reconciled themselves to their new surroundings, and could say in their letter to Bishop Rese "Rev. Father permit me to tell you that we are happy now: that we are contented in the participation of the many wants of human nature of which we are deprived of, that we want not [to] exchange it for any other situation. We are much edified at the exemplary life of the Indians." The end of this noble effort is not revealed in the records of the time.

Badin, returning to South Bend in May, 1834,²⁶ built a chapel and cabin on the banks of the lakes on his plot, naming the place Sainte Marie des Lacs. The Indians, however, were beginning to move west, in accordance with the treaty of Chicago of the previous year, and permanent service to them was out of the question. Bishop Bruté, who was well acquainted with Badin, wrote of Badin's cabin²⁷ as the neglected and abandoned orphanage, indicating that, for a few months at least, an orphanage functioned for the Indians and white children of the neighborhood on the site of the present University of Notre Dame. But these noble women were gone by 1835, and of their subsequent history no trace has yet been found.

Northern Indiana, which was, from 1830 to 1835, the mission field of Father Badin, was perhaps that part of the three states of Indiana, Ohio and Illinois which received the smallest portion of the westward migrations, until after the opening of the Erie Canal and the efforts to build a corresponding canal connecting the Lakes with the larger body of the Wabash. There are various reasons ascribed for the neglect of this portion of the state, but a glance at the map, bearing in mind that the chief

Kalamazoo, Michigan, quoted in W. M. McNamara, *The Catholic Church on the Northern Indiana Frontier, 1789-1844*, Washington, 1931, p. 33.

26 Badin to Purcell, May 10, 1834, UNDA.

27 James Roosevelt Bayley, *Memoirs of the Rt. Rev. Simon William Bruté*, New York, 1876, p. 85.

means of travel were by water, easily explains why these regions would not be settled first. The Wabash, itself, was more or less obstructed above the site of the present city of Lafayette, and the Indians continued to live in security in reservations between that place and the navigable waters of the Maumee and the St. Joseph. Fort Wayne marked the farthest point to which came travelers on the Maumee, except for the few traders who carried their goods down the Wabash, after making the portage near the settlement. The St. Joseph offered the only entrance into the state from Lake Michigan, but the way was much more difficult of access than that of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers, and the Chicago-Illinois routes. Added to this difficulty of approach, there had grown up a tradition that the northern part of Indiana consisted of lands swampy and useless for agriculture.²⁸

Prior to the New England migrations into the northeastern counties, the white inhabitants of the northern part of the state were, for the most part, either French, descendants of earlier traders or more recent immigrants from Canada, or the children of French marriages with the Indians. They were not numerous, but practically all professed to be Catholics. Badin ²⁹ found that Joseph Bailey at Baileytown, the only resident between the St. Joseph and Chicago on the north, was a Catholic. The settlement at Fort Wayne was mostly Canadian, and the other traders along the upper Wabash—Godfroy, Richardville, La-Fontaine, and others,—professed to be Catholic and brought their half-breed children to be baptized by the passing missionary. Gradually, a new infiltration began from Michigan and Ohio by land. These migrants, for the most part, were originally from New England or New York, and among them the number of Catholics was small.

With the beginning of the agitation for internal improvements, especially for the construction of the Wabash-Erie

²⁸ Richard Pyle Power, "Wet Lands and the Hoosier Stereotype," *MVHR* XXII, pp. 32-48.

²⁹ Badin in *Annales*, IV, p. 154.

Canal, great numbers of German and Irish immigrants began to settle in the region between Fort Wayne and Logansport. Their numbers we do not know. Bruté was told that there were 2,000 Irish in this section alone.³⁰ Badin began at once to erect a chapel for them at Fort Wayne. On September 23, 1834, hearing that the newly appointed bishop of Vincennes was about to assume his onerous duties, Badin sent a résumé of the condition of his congregation. Between the lines one can read the sharp humor and caustic attitude of this 68-year-old missionary, but his sincerity no one can doubt, nor the validity of his judgment, except that in his praise for the Indians, he fails to distinguish the small group who had followed his instructions, and were exemplary, and the larger group who were being moved to the West as undesirable neighbors of the whites:

I will not expatiate on the character of our Catholics. It is known that the lower class of the Irish, such as work on canals &c. is too fond of drinking . . . that there are very few of the devout sex, and few children among them. The Canadians are light headed, light hearted, lightfooted, and very ignorant, having been without pastor before I came into the backwoods, and being much intermixed with the Indians. The Germans are of much better dispositions, as also the French from Lorraine and Alsace: but a priest familiar with the Dutch language is indeed wanted.—As to the Indians, the greater number of Christians are on the borders of Michigan, under the direction of the excellent priest, Monsr. de Seille. He made this summer two excursions among the Poutouatamies of Tippecanoe River, and baptized 76 of them, the 1st Sunday of May and 60 more the 1st Sunday of this month. The Poutouatamies, of Mich. have sold all their lands and must migrate within two years; but those of Tippecanoe have retained their Reserves of land, and may form a Catholic Miss. in the Dioc. of Vinc. The Indians are our best Congre.—Town-lots have been procured in five or six different places, viz. South Bend (one and half mile from my establishment on St. Joseph River), Ft. Wayne, Huntington, Wabash and Logansport. Three years ago I obtained also of Judge

30 Bruté to Rosati, Oct. 5, 1834, AASTL.

Hood two acres in the town of Peru, and prevailed on him to make his offer to Bp. Flaget but as he did not answer the polite lett. and lots have become very valuable at Peru, there will perhaps be a demur. I caused the lot of Huntington to be deeded to Bp. Flaget—but the donor of eleven acres in Wabash, being a friend of mine, preferred to give me his obligation for the same and I did not insist otherwise from motives of politeness and prudence.

Prevailing sickness & mortality, the absence of a pastor & poverty have prevented the forwarding of Church affairs. No time should be lost in forwarding the erection of chapels along the canal line, because as soon as the work is done in one section of the country, the Catholic hands move to another section, and the prospect of such erections diminishes or vanishes—This has been evidenced in Fort Wayne: the timber alone has been procured! There should be two priests riding constantly every week along a line of 80 miles: They should be active, pious, learned and disinterested, courageous & mortified.—Most of the marriages have been contracted before the magistr. The law of the Counc. of Trent was published in Detroit, Vincennes, &c. by the Jesuits, but I cannot conclude that it is obligatory in Fort Wayne &c. *viderit Episcopus*. Bp. Fen (Edd.) has been consulted on this subject by the late learned & vener. Pastor of Detroit: *sed in vanum*—The character of our Cath. here has been so little respectable in general, that they rather confirm Protest. prejudices than are available to any conversion. *O tempora O mores!*

Our resource must lie in the education of youth. The introduction of Germans & German-French will offer also consolations to a resident pastor. Mr. Comparet estimates that the congre. in & about Ft. Wayne must amount to 100 families. About 3 miles from that place a glebe-land has been procured, but I have not yet paid nor can pay for it.—I'll close this information by adding that the Legisla. of Inda has granted me a charter to establish St. Joseph Orphan Asylum.—*Soli Deo honor & Gloria. Amen.*³¹

In the regions south and east of the Wabash in Indiana the old French had not penetrated, and the Church there was without the foundations of the French-Canadian population.

³¹ Badin to Purcell, Sept. 23, 1834, UNDA.

As the migration coming into these sections was mostly from the South and East, where Catholics were not numerous in proportion to the population, we find that Catholic families and settlements were correspondingly few.

Under the care of Father Lalumiere and occasional visitors from Kentucky, Catholic families had been discovered in Bartholomew and Shelby counties. A missionary, probably Lalumiere,³² found four or five Catholic families in Columbus in Bartholomew county, some of whom had not heard mass for years. The priest gave a short exposition of the doctrines of the Church to a large assembly in the court house. The correspondent reporting this incident, apparently the priest himself, added "many seemed to be surprised at knowing we believed in Jesus Christ." At Shelby in Shelby County, the missionary found ten Catholic families, some of whom had just arrived during the year 1833. About twenty-five persons approached the sacraments. Although the services were held in a private house, the litany of the Blessed Virgin was sung before the mass, and hymns during the services. As there were some Germans among them, the missionary promised them that a priest speaking both German and English would visit them three or four times a year.

In Daviess County, Father Lalumiere made his home in the center of Catholic migrants from Maryland and Kentucky. The number of families within easy distance of his church was now over a hundred, and there were prospects that other churches would soon be erected for outlying groups. Finally, in order to care for the children of the congregation, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, who conducted the St. Clare's academy at Vincennes, were prevailed upon in March, 1832, to establish a school, in a house given for the purpose, near St. Peter's Church. There were four Sisters under Mother Angela Spink.³³ The effort did not last long, as the financial support was inade-

³² *Catholic Telegraph*, II, May 18, 1833, p. 230.

³³ *Community Records*, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky; McGill, *Sisters of Charity of Nazareth*, pp. 94-5.

quate. Furthermore, about this time, the loss of Sisters in the motherhouse at Nazareth, and expansions nearer home caused the withdrawal of the Sisters at Vincennes. The three contributions of Nazareth to education in Indiana deserve recognition, because they kept alive the ideal, even though hardships prevented the attainment of the reality.

The Catholics who had settled east and south of the White River Valley included many Germans; some had first settled in Cincinnati, while others had come immediately to the small communities in the White Water River Valley and into the settlements near the Ohio. To these scattered families Bishop Flaget was finally able to send Father Joseph Ferneding, a native of Holdorf, Germany. Ferneding,³⁴ one of the great German missionaries of the Ohio Valley, after completing most of his studies at Oldenburg, had come to join the diocese of Cincinnati, but he had arrived during the absence of Bishop Fenwick, who was making a tour of the missions of the northwest. When the Bishop succumbed to an attack of cholera on this trip, the young seminarian went to Louisville for employment and, from there, entered Flaget's seminary at Bardstown. Flaget ordained him on July 25, 1833, and sent him first to Louisville to work with Father Abell. After a few weeks Father Ferneding began to care for the scattered missions north the Ohio River. He settled himself first at Rockford in Jackson County, where there was already a German settlement. He later established himself in New Alsace. From these points he³⁵ visited Dearborn, Ripley and Franklin counties regularly. At Dover, Dearborn county, then called McKenzie's settlement, where a colony of settlers from Maryland had established themselves, a log church had been built in 1824. This place was served from Cincinnati until the time of Ferneding.³⁶ Farther

34 Francis S. Holweck, "Two Pioneer Indiana Priests," *Mid-America*, XII, New Series I, July, 1929, pp. 78-81.

35 Manuscript list of Ferneding's mission UNDA; *Catholic Telegraph*, III (1834), pp. 278-9.

36 O'Daniel, *Life of Edward Fenwick, O.P.*, p. 316.

north in Wayne County at Abington and in Richmond, there were several Catholic families whom Ferneding occasionally visited. It is also related that Father Badin in his journeys from South Bend and Fort Wayne to Kentucky and Cincinnati, never losing a chance to do missionary work, used to visit these Catholic groups wherever he could find them.

Other places to the west along the Ohio river were visited, whenever occasion permitted, by priests from Kentucky. Besides Father Abell, who crossed from Louisville, and Father Ferneding, there were Father Charles Coomes and Father Elisha Durbin. Durbin, who was stationed in Union County Kentucky, visited the section in and around Evansville. Of the number of Catholic families they found in these regions, no record exists. The Louisville cathedral records prior to 1836 are missing. Durbin did not signify in his entries the residence of those to whom he administered the sacraments, and the permanent records of these early missions in Indiana seldom give any information prior to 1836. But there is sufficient evidence to show that outside the settlements enjoying missionary visits were many Catholic families, patiently praying and hoping for the ministration of priests. Their prayers, and the urging of Champomier, Flaget, and Rosati, were to be answered in 1834, when Simon Bruté of Mt. St. Mary's College was named to the new bishopric of Vincennes.

The Second Provincial Council of Baltimore had petitioned Rome for the erection of a new see at Vincennes in its meeting on October 26, 1833.³⁷ For some reason the see was not set up immediately, but was delayed until May, the following year. The new diocese was to include the whole state of Indiana and the eastern third of the state of Illinois. The actual western boundary was a line from the Ohio through the eastern boundaries of the counties of Johnson, Franklin, Fayette, Jefferson, Marion, Shelby, and Macon, to the Grand Rapids of the Illinois

³⁷ Peter Guilday, *A History of the Councils of Baltimore (1791-1884)*, New York, 1932, p. 106; Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S.B., *Simon Bruté de Remur First Bishop of Vincennes*, St. Meinrad, Ind., 1931, pp. 199-201.

River in Lassele County, and from there to the northern boundary of Illinois. Possibly Rome was uncertain of the desirability of the proposed diocese. The new bishop would have agreed with that doubt, for he called the erection of his see the creation of a diocese *en blanc*.

While admittedly a spiritual man and a successful educator, Bruté did not have the approval of such churchmen as Bishop John England of Charleston and Father John Power of New York. Born in Rennes, given an education which included preparation for a career as a physician, Simon William Gabriel Bruté de Remur³⁸ at the time of his choice was superior of the Seminary at Mt. St. Mary's in Emmitsburg. Although he had been engaged in some pastoral functions, he was best known in Maryland as a director of Sisters and a teacher of theology. He was not physically strong, had lost his teeth, and had a distinct French accent. Of his zeal no one doubted, but of his suitability for the missions there was question. Furthermore, the sacrifice of the professors of the only efficient Catholic school in the country to supply missionary bishops was sure to spoil the future of the school, and render dubious aid to the West.

Bruté delayed his answer until he had consulted his spiritual advisers, but he finally accepted. He began immediately to plan his consecration, and to study the condition of the diocese. The date for the consecration was first set for October 5, 1834, but, at the request of Bishop Rosati, who was consecrating his cathedral at St. Louis, the day was changed to October 28 at St. Louis. On September 15, Bruté began his journey to the West, going first to Bardstown to confer with Bishop Flaget. Together, the two leaders and their friends passed through Vincennes on their way to St. Louis, but they traveled *incognito*. After his consecration, the Bishop returned to take over his new see on November 5. But, in the meantime, he found his diocesan clergy depleted in numbers. The diocese, as constituted by the

³⁸ Godecker, *op. cit.*, 1931, pp. 205-7.

papal decree, included the eastern part of Illinois and the promising village of Chicago. At that time, Bishop Rosati had loaned to Bishop Flaget, Father Ignatius St. Cyr of the Vincentians, but, needing him for his own diocese, he had announced his recall. Picot, as we have seen, had been withdrawn from Vincennes. His successor was the Jesuit, Father Louis Petit, but the Jesuit superior at St. Mary's College, Bardstown, insisted that he return. At best, Bruté³⁹ could get a promise that he would remain for a few days after the installation of the new Bishop. Badin, in the north, really belonged to Cincinnati, and Ferneding in the east to Bardstown. The only permanent missionary attached to the diocese was Father Simon Lalumiere who was working from St. Peter's. The Sisters of Nazareth had abandoned the Vincennes school. The outlook for the new bishop was rather dark. He had no promise from Badin, but Flaget permitted Ferneding to remain in southeastern Indiana. Rosati, after much urging, delayed the recall of St. Cyr. Bruté, himself, was forced to act as pastor as well as Bishop of Vincennes.

The state of Indiana, the major portion of his diocese, was, at that time, experiencing the effect of the change in commerce and communication resulting from the building of canals. The epidemics of 1818-20 and the stories spread about the swamp lands had given the state a rather unpleasant reputation among incoming pioneers. The shifting of markets and trade from the Mississippi to the Great Lakes by reason of the building of the Erie Canal had damaged the river traffic, and, at the same time, shifted the routes of the immigrants to the Great Lakes, and to the states more accessible by that waterway. The great push for internal improvements, occasioned by the successful operation of the eastern canals, had brought about a craze for internal improvements in Indiana that had various effects. The foremost proposal was for the building of a canal connecting the Wabash and the Maumee, and several canals

39 Bruté to Rosati, Oct. 5, 1834, AAStL.

down the White Water Valley. There was discussion of a road to the new capital, Indianapolis, and the Michigan Road to some port on Lake Michigan. Accessible markets have always been an important factor in population movements. Unless the pioneering farmers could sell their products, they could not improve their status and buy the implements and manufactures that indicated progress in the American sense. With only the Wabash and the Ohio for external communication, Indiana could not expect to compete with the states which bordered on the Great Lakes or the Mississippi, and had harbors on these great arteries of transportation.

Physical features had much to do with the population of the state at the time of Bruté's installation. The southern branches of the Ohio were attracting non-slaveholding proprietors from Kentucky and Tennessee, and were unloading them on the shores of the Ohio. Others came by way of the Cumberland Gap from the Carolinas and southern Virginia. These settlers coming by way of the White Water Valley, the Wabash and White rivers and the few existing overland trails, such as the roads from Madison to Indianapolis, Louisville to Vincennes, and Louisville to Lafayette, were making the majority of inhabitants southern in sympathy, Democratic in politics, at least in later years, and Protestant in religion.⁴⁰ To these groups were added the immigrants coming down the Ohio from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio, including among them many from Europe who had reached the Ohio at Pittsburgh. The northern part of the state was to receive its greatest increase from the New York and New England groups, arriving by way of the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, which also included some immigrants from Europe who had means or aid in getting away from the ports of entry. All of these groups brought with them the social customs of their former homes. Some institutions were imposed by law before the

⁴⁰ Esarey, *op. cit.*, p. 202; Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years*, 1826 (Americana Deserta Edition, New York, 1932), pp. 56-7.

country was settled, such as the religious liberty laws, the non-slavery clauses of the Ordinance of 1787, and the provision for public schools. Religiously, likewise, they brought with them the traditions of their own country. Only in the case of the Catholics did they find their faith already established, and, wherever possible, Catholics sought to settle around the old French centers to receive the ministrations of the few priests in the territory. Of course, many times their economic needs prevented them from locating near such centers as Vincennes or Fort Wayne. There were scattered Catholic families throughout the state, some of whom in time ceased to be Catholic. The Church was not strong in the East, outside of certain sections of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the Catholics of the eastern migrations were mostly foreigners from Ireland, Germany or France. Likewise, in the southern migrations, with the exception of those who came up the river from New Orleans and from the Catholic settlements of Kentucky and Carolina, there were few Catholics.

As the representative of the Pope, Bishop Bruté was sent to erect churches and to administer the sacraments to these people scattered throughout these four millions of square miles. Protestant organizations had similar tasks.⁴¹ The Baptists had been the first Protestant group in the field, creating associations and even sending missionaries to the Indians. The Methodists had circuits organized in the southwestern and southeastern sections. The Presbyterians, likewise, were introducing ministers from Kentucky. But these denominations, with the non-sacramental character of their ministry and a membership mostly American and financially able to contribute, could easily supply ministers. Vincennes up until this time did not have regular ministrations from Protestant clergymen, but there were resident ministers within a radius of twenty-five miles. Some of the Protestant groups met the demand for ministers in the simple way of raising up leaders among the uneducated farmers who

41 Esarey, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-6.

devoted their Sundays to the work of preaching. This solution enabled the Baptist and Methodist groups, particularly, to take advantage of frontier conditions. Much differently situated, Bruté saw at once that to take care of his scattered flock, he would have to go to Europe to get the priests and the funds that his immigrant flock had not brought with them. It is interesting to note, however, that the only priest he had to help him was Father Lalumiere, a native of Vincennes.

CHAPTER VIII

BISHOP BRUTÉ FINDS HIS FLOCK

BISHOP BRUTÉ had arrived in his episcopal city late in the fall, and he had to content himself during the winter months with exploring the neighborhood and reviving, once more, the faith of the descendants of the old French. He found the French in Vincennes and at the River Cat,¹ on the west side of the Wabash, still singing the glory of the charity of Flaget, the pastor of Vincennes in the plague of 1792-3. In Daviess County, at the headquarters of Father Lalumiere, he was delighted to meet families he had known in Maryland² and to see the faith of those who had recently come from Kentucky. Christmas Day he spent alone,³ in poverty. Petit had been recalled, and Bruté discovered that neither Petit nor Picot had received the support promised by the trustees. He saw little hope of receiving much from his poor parishioners. His cathedral, a large building for this frontier town, was bare and cold, little more than four painted walls. But the whole populace of the town welcomed him, because everyone felt that the community had gained by his advent.⁴

As regards the spiritual condition of his flock, Bruté found little to encourage him. In his first month, only one man came to communion and only about ten in all, including women and children. He had induced a Mrs. Granville,⁵ sent to him by Bishop Purcell from Cincinnati, to conduct a school until he could obtain a return of the Sisters. But his church, without heat, unplastered, and without a proper ceiling, was too cold for his congregation. Scarcely half attended services in the cooler weather. He had to be satisfied with low mass said in

1 *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 61.

2 Bruté to Father John McCaffery, March 13, 1835, Mt. St. Mary's Archives.

3 Bruté to Rese, Jan. 8, 1835, UNDA.

4 *Catholic Telegraph*, IV (1835), p. 92.

5 Bruté to Rosati, Mar. 2, 1835, AAStL.

the school. He made a short trip to Terre Haute and the French settlements across the Wabash, acquainting himself with the hardship of pioneer travel. But the French showed little eagerness to return to the practices of their religion. Occasionally, he baptized a convert from Protestantism. One day in March, a man came from Evansville demanding to see this "man of sin."⁶ Bruté enjoyed the visit, and dressed himself in all his robes even to the miter for his visitor, who was quite pleased at his reception, and promised to convince his neighbors that the bishop's things were "paraphernalia," not "infernalialia."

Lent brought about a quickening of the religious spirit of the people, and 60 persons received their first communion at Easter. On the following Sunday,⁷ Bruté gave confirmation to his first class, a group of about 90 persons. He found that he had some 1500 souls under his immediate care; and, besides saying two Sunday masses, preaching twice, once in French and once in English, he had to go often as much as ten miles to attend the sick. With the close of the Easter season and the coming of spring, the Bishop decided to make a survey of his diocese with the aid of Father Lalumiere, in preparation for his journey to Europe for aid and priests. To Father Lalumiere he assigned the task of visiting the eastern half of the diocese, and he himself set out on April 29 for the nearest missions across the Wabash.⁸

In Edgar county Bishop Bruté found a settlement similar to the Kentucky group around St. Peter's in Daviess county. In the journey through Illinois he remarked on the number of migrants moving west to find new homes.

⁶ Bruté to Rosati, Mar. 19, 1835, AASTL.

⁷ Bruté to Rese, April 16, 1835, Bruté to Gaston, May 6, 1835, UNDA.

⁸ Accounts of this journey are almost as numerous as the correspondents of Bruté. The chief accounts are: Bayley, *Memoirs of Bruté*, pp. 75-93; *Catholic Telegraph*, IV, pp. 317-8, 333-4, 349; Bruté to McCaffrey, June 6, 1835, Mt. St. Mary's Archives; Bruté to Timon, May 28, 1835, and Bruté to Gaston, May 6, 1835, UNDA.

The weary but eager emigrants were seen in the distance, they approached and passed by—men on horseback were exploring the country, or journeying to the homes they had selected and secured—families with their wagons were pressing forward to these parts which gave promise of rapid improvement, and young mechanics on foot with their light bundles and a few tools, and untired throughout their long journey, passed him by—they passed and were soon lost to sight! It was ‘the figure of this world that passeth away’ . . . Everywhere, speculation, in all its forms, bespeaks reciprocal confidence, between the occupants of the lands and those who come, with a view of improving their various advantages, for commerce or agriculture. It would, perhaps, be better if the word “Grocery” in large characters did not so frequently invite the early attention of the settlers. But let charity condemn only abuses! Is not the grocery if properly conducted a very necessary item in the formation of a village! Hospitality was readily afforded in every house along the road, both in Illinois and Indiana, and in so plain, kind and cheering a manner as to make the traveller feel perfectly at home. Admitted, welcomed and entertained without question or enquiry, the discovery of the character of the guest whether a Catholic priest or Bishop made no change.⁹

As a matter of fact, Bruté stopped frequently with non-Catholics and, occasionally, with clergymen of Protestant denominations. From Paris and Danville, he passed on to Georgetown and then to the thriving village of Chicago, where Father St. Cyr had built a church and was instructing a growing congregation. From Chicago Bruté and his lay companion turned eastward, visiting first Michigan City, where he found pioneers building houses and beginning the work of clearing the land. He passed on to Laporte, and turned a bit north to Pokagon’s village to visit Father DeSeille, the pastor of the Indian missions.

When the Bishop arrived, he was taken immediately to the humble cabin of Father DeSeille. The whole of the lower floor was used as a chapel. The upper floor was the priest’s living quarters, with a small table, a seat and a “swinging bed or hammock.” “A partition secured him a record room for all

⁹ *Catholic Telegraph*, IV, p. 317.

purposes of hospitality, storage, &c. A porch of poles and bark projects towards the garden, by which name the worthy man has dignified a little patch of cabbages and potatoes which he can have no thought of improving since his friends must so soon move away." The missionary was a very zealous Flammand, who had spent the first ten years of his priesthood in Merebecke and, then, had volunteered for the American missions. Bishop Purcell had sent him to join Badin, and Badin, in turn, had left him in charge of the Indians, while he set about to establish churches in northern Indiana. Already some of his fellow Belgians were following the young priest into the settlements about the St. Joseph River. "He spends his life with his good people, sharing their corn and meat, with water for his drink, and tea from the herbs of his little garden. He abjures all spirits, as all the Catholic Indians are forbidden to touch that which is the bane of their race, and he would encourage them by his example." Bruté attended their services and spoke to them through an interpreter. The Indians sang their hymns from books in the Ottawa language "with great ensemble and tolerably pleasing harmony, but indeed most pleasing earnestness and devotion." ¹⁰

From Pokagon's village the Bishop accompanied Father De-Seille to visit the Indians of his own diocese on the Tippecanoe River. Across the St. Joseph near South Bend they stopped to see the remains of Father Badin's orphanage. Badin had turned over the house and the 500 acres to Bruté on condition that the latter assume some trifling debts incurred in building the house.¹¹ The site of the present University of Notre Dame caught the fancy of the bishop. "The house is on an eminence near a small lake surrounded by a meadow and woods of luxuriant growth . . . in this part of the country where there are already a few Catholic families Americans, Irish, and French." ¹² Bruté hoped to get the Jesuits or the Vincentians

¹⁰ Bruté to Timon, May 28, 1835, UNDA.

¹¹ Badin to Bruté deed, copy in UNDA.

¹² *Catholic Telegraph*, IV, p. 334.

to start a college here, but neither group had men to spare for the undertaking. He proceeded to Tippecanoe, but before he arrived at the village of Chief Chichakos, the Indians were out to meet him. After partaking of a cup of coffee, the cavalcade moved on to the principal settlement, where Father DeSeille had already converted about 120.

The chapel was a temporary structure of bark spread over stakes and covered with curved rods. Its benches accommodated the missionaries for the night. The next day, there was a solemn gathering at which the chief, Chichakos, made a speech of welcome and offered the bishop a section of 320 acres of land. Then, mass was said at which the natives sang in Ottawa and the Bishop gave confirmation. He baptized six persons and confirmed sixteen. In the afternoon, vespers were sung in Ottawa, and, then, the Bishop and his companion pushed on about fifteen miles, where they received hospitality from a member of the "Christian" sect. The next day, they arrived at Logansport where they found quite a colony of Catholics engaged in the preliminary work on the proposed canal. These people had plans for a church, and to them the Bishop promised a priest as soon as possible. From Logansport they passed along the regular stage route to Fayetteville, Attica, Covington, and Terre Haute. There were few Catholics in these towns, except Terre Haute, where there were about 20. From there, Bruté returned to Vincennes to await the report of Father Lalumiere.

Father Lalumiere had found more Catholics scattered through the eastern part of the state than Bishop Bruté reported in the west. From the Catholic settlements in Daviess County,¹³ he visited families in Columbus, Shelbyville, and Abington, and, then proceeded north to Fort Wayne. There was no other notable Catholic settlement until he came to the Wabash at Fort Wayne, where Father Badin had already been active. All along the canal line to Logansport, he met Catholic immigrants. At

13 Bruté to Timon, May 28, 1835, UNDA.

Fort Wayne,¹⁴ construction was already begun on a church. Likewise, at Peru a church was being built. At Logansport, Lagros, and Huntington, lots had been bought and plans for churches were being made. Bishop Bruté had just received Father Michael Ruff, who had been ordained at St. Louis by Bishop Rosati for Vincennes, and, as he spoke German as well as English and French, Bruté sent him at once to Fort Wayne to care for the immigrant German and Irish, who already outnumbered the French.

Bruté had hoped to visit, likewise, the southern part of his diocese, especially the counties taken care of by Father Ferneding, but found that the time was too short. Father Ferneding had settled at New Alsace. He had organized congregations in Dearborn, Ripley and Franklin counties, and was gathering the German settlers, especially, into small congregations. Along the Ohio at Evansville, St. Mary's of the Knobs, New Albany, St. Mary's in Perry County, Madison, and various other sites, soon to have chapels, the missionaries from Kentucky¹⁵ made occasional visits when their own duties permitted.

The Bishop was now acquainted with the vast needs of his diocese. No longer was the Wabash Valley merely a remnant of the old French missions. Far more numerous were the new groups of Americans and immigrant Catholics who were occupying the lands, preparing the canals and railroads, and building the cities of the state. Bruté realized that, instead of creating a diocese out of nothing, as he had said on his coming to Vincennes, he had found the diocese already in existence, lacking only the services of priests. But this problem of caring for the scattered Catholic population and bringing in priests, in addition to those trained at home, was to remain the chief work of the bishops of the state during the nineteenth century. One would get an incorrect notion of the rise of the Church during this century, if he measured merely by the growth of buildings

¹⁴ *Catholic Telegraph* (1836), V, p. 68; Bruté to Rosati, July 13, 1835, AASTL.

¹⁵ Alerding, *Vincennes*, Indianapolis, 1883, p. 263.

and the increase in clergy. Separated by long distance from corporal union with their bishops, there were always countless Catholics united only in spirit with the Church. They prayed, they watched, they begged for priests. While many of them failed to gain physical unity with the Church, sincere tribute must be paid to others for their fidelity and courage which made possible the Church of the West. There were always converts to the Church in these districts, but that was not the real growth of the Church. The spread of Catholicism that so aroused Lyman Beecher¹⁶ and other alarmists in these early days, was not so much the conversion of Protestants, as the efforts of the Church to give spiritual guidance to those in the West who were already of the faith. The money that came¹⁷ from Europe was not a huge campaign fund to turn the minds of non-believers, but merely charity to enable neglected French and impoverished immigrants to have the consolation of those religious institutions which they could not bring with them, and which a Protestant majority did not supply.

Bruté, going to Europe for help, was merely hoping for the means to care for his flock in the wilderness. Of this flock the French around Vincennes, at Fort Wayne, and near the old St. Joseph Mission were the connecting link with the old Church. They were generally poor, although some in the north, having come later into the country, had been more successful in their trading and business. They were mostly ignorant, having been without schools for generations. They were sometimes confused in their religious notions because, while they had been faithful to their Church, they were unschooled in its dogmas, having had so few teachers. They were now a minority in the new diocese because of the increasing immigration, and, in time, were to lose themselves in the mass of the people.

¹⁶ Lyman D. Beecher, *A Plea for the West*, Cincinnati, 1835; Ray Allen Billington, "Tentative Bibliography of Anti-Catholic Propaganda in the United States," *CHR*, XVIII (1933), pp. 492-513.

¹⁷ Joseph Freri, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and Catholic Missions*, Baltimore, 1912.

It took the bishop a year to survey the condition of his diocese, to understand that far from creating a diocese *en blanc*, Rome had merely sent him to lead a clergy to a waiting flock. Catholicism had never died in the hearts of the simple habitants, even though lack of priests had prevented the full observance of Catholic services for such long intervals. Vincennes had kept the faith throughout the period of desolation, and even now supplied the ministry for the incoming immigrants; but its poverty and its lack of educational opportunities made it necessary that the future work should receive outside aid from the Church it had served so well. With Bruté from Europe came eight priests and eight seminarians. Two Germans, Fathers Bernard Schaeffer and Louis Mueller, he sent at once to aid the German Catholics in the northern part of the diocese. Father Louis Neyron from Bellay was assigned to New Albany and the chapel of St. Mary's in the Knobs. Stanislaus Buteux was to care for the church at Terre Haute and Thrawls Settlement. Celestine de la Hailandiere was made rector of the cathedral and of the neighboring settlements. Maurice de St. Palais took care of St. Mary's, Mt. Pleasant, and the German settlements in Dubois county. Jean Corbe worked with Hailandiere. Jean Vabret, of the Society of Eudists, was to establish the Seminary of Vincennes for training native candidates for the priesthood. The seminarians, nearly all in major orders, were sent to Mt. St. Mary's at Emmitsburg, to complete their studies and prepare for ordination in the following year. Bruté had already at work, Fathers Francois at Logansport, Ferneding at the towns in the southeast, Lalumiere near Vincennes and DeSeille attending the Indians and white settlements in northern Indiana.

These scattered missionaries, each situated in the largest group of Catholics in their neighborhood, sought to cover the whole state, combing out, as it were, the hidden Catholic families, reviving the faith of those who had been neglected, building churches, and establishing mission stations in smaller communities.

As the new churches of frame and log arose throughout the state, the period of transition which began when Gibault left Vincennes—the period of the happy pastorates of Flaget and Rivet, the desolate years from Rivet to Blanc, and the constructive efforts of Champomier, Picot and Petit—came to an end with the advent of the master builders Bruté and Hailandiere. Historically, it is not hard to see that the later Church is built on the old foundation. The French of old Vincennes remained throughout the whole period, afflicted and impoverished, and at times a bit rebellious, but generally faithful. They were the pioneer Catholic immigrants and selected the first see of the later diocese. As the years passed, other stones were united to form the multiple-colored structure of the later Church.

These later immigrants, English, German, Irish, and others, built the churches and schools which have become symbolic of the modern Catholic Church in Indiana. To the casual observer, it may seem that they deserve the whole credit for the progress of the Church. The French contribution is harder to understand. Their simple chapels of the days of Rivet had disappeared, and their financial aid to the new buildings had been as small as the number of their descendants was among the mass of immigrants. But the French still worshipped where their ancestors had built their chapels; and if the Catholic faith centered in these localities, it was because the later missionaries found here French Catholics with whom to reestablish congregations. In recognizing their fidelity as the foundation stone of the later Church in Indiana, one does not speak of ordained ministry, although they contributed Father Lalumiere, nor of the church buildings, although under Champomier they did contribute something, but of persistence of the Catholic faith in their settlements. The fidelity of the French in Indiana, from Gibault to Bruté, was chiefly in the things of the spirit, rather than in those properties by which the physical growth of institutions are measured. The French tested this principle to the limit by their failure to support the missionaries sent to them during the time of transition; yet they never ceased to be Catholic. It was a tradition of Cath-

olicism, not of wealth or learning, that they kept alive in their century of trial. Necessary as church buildings and school houses are to the permanency of religion in a community, they are not essential to the salvation of souls. Poverty and illiteracy have been found among saints. The modern American Catholic chides the old French for their failure to give financial support to the church; but he must recognize that they gave to later Catholics the spiritual example of fidelity amidst trials, and that they established and maintained Catholicism in the Middle West from the day of the fur-trader to the arrival of the later immigrant. These immigrants, American or European, have built visible monuments of the faith that was continuous in Indiana for nearly two hundred years—monuments to those who, in poverty and oppression kept the faith from Father Gibault's time to the coming of Bishop Bruté.

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